

SOCCER

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WEEKLY

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GST INCLUSIVE

ANGE REFLECTS ON JOEYS LOSS

By Peter Damalas

National under 17s coach, Ange Postecoglou, has reflected on the disappointment of first round elimination by stating that the overall standard of the competition was impressive.

The Joeys returned home from the World Youth Championships in Finland after losing their three first round matches.

With only one goal scored and two players sent off, Postecoglou admitted the Australian team "didn't have a great time".

"The preparation was not a problem. We played some hard opposition and the mood in the camp was pretty positive [leading into the first match against Argentina]," Postecoglou said.

The Joeys lost to the powerful Argentina side after conceding an early goal and having defender Nigel Boogaard sent off in the first half. Matt Hilton was also dismissed in the third match against Costa Rica.

"Having a player sent off made things hard. I thought that both red cards were not justified and were pretty harsh."

"But I suppose it was a reflection on us and the fact that we weren't playing well. These things tend to happen when you don't play well."

"This loss put pressure on us straight away. We



Ange Postecoglou: Under 17 Joeys coach.

bounced back against a difficult Nigeria side and we led for seventy minutes of that match before the Nigerians came on top and scored two goals" he said.

Postecoglou considered the 2-0 loss to Costa Rica to be another "let down", especially since the team had been eliminated and were playing for pride.

The Latin nations have dominated this year's Under 17s championships, with Brazil and Spain contesting

the final, at the expense of Argentina and Colombia.

"The overall standard of the competition was pretty strong. It is important to us because it shows us the standards we need to reach."

"I think we still have three or four players capable of making the grade for the senior team in the future. They will learn a lot from this experience and will come back better players," Postecoglou said.

The men's football tourna-

FORCE OUT!

In shock news towards the start of this season's National League, the Adelaide City Force last Sunday evening decided not to continue its relationship in Australia's elite competition.

One of the founders of the National League, the main reason the side pulled the plug on the competition was due to financial reasons.

Force President Bob D'Ottavi said that the decision to withdraw from the league was voted for by club members at the meeting in Adelaide.

It will be the first season since the NSL began in 1977 that the club, which has won three championships and came third last season, will not be a participant.

D'Ottavi, who has personally put millions of dollars into the club to help it survive in recent seasons, said he could not afford to continue doing so.

"We are out of the NSL," D'Ottavi told AAP.

"We do not believe we have got the finances to meet our budget."

"I am not prepared to keep putting in money, I have run out, I can't put in any more."

He said no one else had come forward who was prepared to help back the team.

D'Ottavi also said Soccer Australia had recently asked the clubs to put in extra money because it had not been able to secure a sponsor for the league, but was not willing to give the clubs any control in return.

He said the Force would field a team in Adelaide's Premier League this season, and he would not rule out a return to the NSL in future seasons.

Players who were contracted to Adelaide

would have their contracts honoured, and could play in the premier league, or would be transferred to other NSL clubs, he said.

It is rumored that there could be another team from Adelaide set to take the Force's spot with speculation that South Australian businessman Con Makris could be involved.

Makris has hinted his Adelaide Galaxy could fill the void left by Adelaide City in this season's NSL.

Currently in Athens, Makris told *The Age*, "I put that submission in to Soccer Australia before and it was turned down."



Con Makris: Could fill the Force's void with the Adelaide Galaxy.

"I am not going to ring them (the NSL) and we don't know just yet but I feel that Adelaide should have a team in the national league. I am flying back later this week and will look further."

"The Galaxy has got a team which is good enough to play in the NSL. They are in the finals in South Australia, and I think they could beat eight of the teams currently in the NSL."

TURKEY MATCH CONFIRMED

Soccer Australia last week announced that it has confirmed an international match for the Qantas Under 23's against Turkey to be played at the Inonu Stadium, Istanbul on Wednesday 10 September 2003 - kick-off 8pm (Istanbul time).

Coach Frank Farina has

named a 18-man squad for the match and follows the team's last outing in April against Spain. The squad features seven players based in the National Soccer League, eleven European based players as well as three players, Scott McDonald, David Tarka and Alex Brosque, from the Qantas Young Socceroos.

The men's football tourna-

ment at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games will be held between 11 August and 28 August 2004.

It will be the first match for an Australian side against Turkish opposition at any level.

The full squad that has been selected to travel to Turkey is:

GOALKEEPERS

Eugene Galekovic - South Melbourne (Australia)
Brad Jones - Rotherham United (England)

DEFENDERS

Ljubo Milicevic - FC Thun (Switzerland)
David Tarka - Nottingham Forest (England)

Shane Cansdell-Sherriff - AGF Aarhus (Denmark)
Patrick Kismorbo - Heart of Midlothian (Scotland)

Jonathan McKain - National Bucuresti (Romania)
Jade North - Perth Glory (Australia)

MIDFIELDERS

Gareth Edds - Bradford City (England)
Richard Garcia - West Ham (England)
Luke Wilshire - Bristol City (England)
Wayne Srhoj - Perth Glory (Australia)
Ahmad Elrich - Parramatta Power (Australia)
Lucas Pantelis - Parramatta Power (Australia)

FORWARDS

Alex Brosque - Marconi Stallions (Australia)
Brett Holman - Excelsior (on loan from Feyenoord)
Scott McDonald - Wimbledon (England)
Scott Tunbridge - Adelaide City Force (Australia)

ABSW EXCLUSIVE

South Could Have Stopped 2002/03 Finals

By Brendon Davis

yet the rules have not been applied consistently - costing South a position in last season's finals.

This seems to be in stark contrast to the treatment received by certain Sydney Clubs whose financial obligations to the NSL seem almost discretionary. Questions have been asked about the link between the generosity shown to some clubs over unpaid monies and boardroom support for certain NSL officials.

Several officials contacted said Northern Spirit were not financial in accordance with the NSL rules through most of last season, with the Sydney Club ultimately displacing South in the finals series.

As the new season commences Northern Spirit have still not paid their \$250,000 change of ownership fee. The NSL Club meeting in Sydney last week reaffirmed the NSL commitment which will prevent unfinancial clubs from being able to play for premiership points.

Last seasons NSL finals were almost thrown in to turmoil. South Melbourne, who missed the finals by the narrowest of margins had the legal ability to stop last seasons finals a club official told a sponsors dinner this week.

Infact there was at least one club that was a participant in the finals series that was ineligible to participate given serious breaches of the NSL rules according to this Director.

"It was solely due to Souths commitment to the National League and our commitment to Australian Soccer that prevented us from incurring the fines" this director told ABSW.

South officials are furious they were forced to courier a cheque for \$1,500 to the NSL before their game with Olympic, failing which the NSL informed South they would be "un-financial" so ineligible to play for points.

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aussiesabroad

BY DANIEL KUZIOW

Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier has pleaded with supporters to be patient with new signing Harry Kewell.

Kewell has struggled to live up to his big-name billing in the opening weeks of the new season, but Houllier insists: "He's new to the team and the club. Sometimes that takes a bit of time.

"You have to be indulgent with his performance. He did not have a full week of training. He did not play in the Australia international and barely trained until the Friday.

"I was not surprised that he did not start very well. But as I

signing Rangers fullback Kevin Muscat.

The Australia international will move to the New Den on loan after failing to break into the Gers line-up over the past year.

McGhee said, "I'm looking to improve our defensive record which is already excellent and also to put a bit of emphasis on the quality of our play going forward, including the full backs who have to join in. I want to put players already at the club under pressure to do better.

"There are one or two technicalities which have to be ironed



Harry Kewell: Needs to settle into his new role according to manager Gerard Houllier.

expected, he got better as the game went on and made a good contribution. It happens sometimes because a player misses training through injury.

"It adds a bit of pressure on him because people talked about his transfer as being very important to us. But he is comfortable, he is settling well with his team-mates and it takes a bit of time to learn to work with your colleagues.

"But all the players trust him and he trusts the other players. He will be fine, no problem, despite the attention he gets and the things that are being written about him.

"I know he's a big player, a winner and a fighter with creative talent. That's what he will bring to us.

"I like him playing on the right and I like him playing just behind the strikers, that is where he will be most effective for us.

"It is an asset that he can play in several roles. I like him when he plays on the left or right, but he is not a wide player, just a very good offensive midfield player."

★ ★ ★

Millwall boss Mark McGhee is confident of



Mark Schwarzer: Still confident of securing a European spot for next season.

three but the Aussie international keeper insists the overall target for this campaign remains unchanged - a UEFA Cup spot.

"Everybody wants to play at the highest level, everybody wants to play in Europe, and that's what football is all about," Schwarzer told Teamtalk.com.

"We want it and I'm sure the supporters want it. But our immediate aim is to play better than we did in the first two games of the season.

"We should have got something out of the Fulham match and, although Arsenal are a quality side, we performed badly.

"Against Leicester, it may not have been pretty to watch but we stuck in and worked hard."

out yet on the player's side, and once that's been done hopefully he'll be a Millwall player by the weekend."

★ ★ ★

Kilmarnock's close season

by Danny Invincible was

on the field for just 25 minutes

of last Saturday's first home fixture of the season before having to limp off with an ankle injury, following a crude tackle from Thistle's David Lilley.

Although it's difficult to be

precise about how long he'll be

out, manager Jim Jefferies said

that it could be anything up to

six weeks.

"Until the swelling goes

down the doctors don't know

the exact damage," said the

manager.

"But Danny is being positive

about the whole thing and will

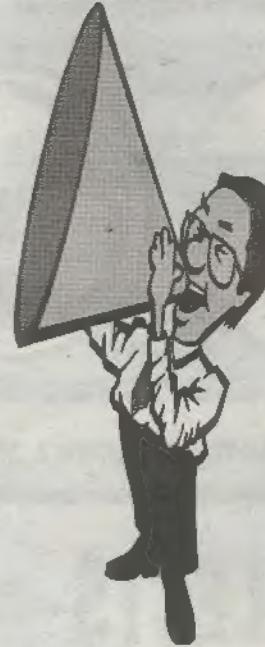
be keen to get back as soon as

possible."

★ ★ ★

Mark Schwarzer believes Middlesbrough's European dream could still be on despite their poor start to the domestic campaign.

The Teessiders have picked up a single point in their first



the club for over four weeks and was given a short-term contract when the Football League relaxed an embargo on signings.

But McDonald has made just two appearances as a substitute for the first team, and manager Stuart Murdoch wants him to work on his fitness.

Murdoch said: "He still needs to get fitter. He had a late start to pre-season training because of his release by Southampton."

★ ★ ★

Dundee midfielder Mark Robertson has joined St Johnstone on loan for a second spell at McDiarmid Park.

The Australian midfielder spent the tail end of last season with Saints, impressing manager Billy Stark before being side-



Scott McDonald: Has been told by Wimbledon boss Stuart Murdoch to gain more match fitness before making his debut for the Dons.

couldn't let him down."

A spokesman for the SFA confirmed: "We were keen on Tim and are disappointed he's not interested."

★ ★ ★

Scott McDonald will have to get more match fitness before he makes his full Wimbledon debut.

The 20-year-old has been at



Mark Robertson: Has rejoined St Johnstone on loan from Dundee.

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Okon: I was ready to quit Leeds

New Vicenza signing Paul Okon has admitted he was ready to quit the European game and return to Australia before last week's international friendly against Ireland.

Okon has signed a one-year deal with Vicenza, with the option of another 12 months and revealed to the *Sun-Herald*: "Before the game against Ireland I was thinking about quitting and going home."

"This is my 13th season in Europe and I am very, very homesick."

"Leading the team out against Ireland reminded me of what it means to play for Australia. The only reason I didn't quit was because I want to play for Australia at the next World Cup."

"I was very serious about quitting, the national team is the only reason why I'm still in Europe."

"I've earned enough from the game. I'm not hanging around for money."

Okon was given a free transfer by Leeds United last week prior to the transfer window closing.

The midfielder's hopes of securing a permanent Australian Roos spot was thrown a life-line with this move to Vicenza, however the on-going problems with the Italian Serie B could well delay Okon's debut for the side.

Paul becomes the second

Australian to play for Vicenza, current Perth Glory defender and Australian Youth International Mark Byrnes played for the side a few years back before making the trek back to Australia.

It is expected that Okon will skipper the side against the Jamaicans in the Socceroos next friendly match to be held in England.



Paul Okon: Contemplated quitting the game.

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A Day In The Life of An NSWIS Grad

By Will Thom

It is every young player's dream to represent their country and play football at a professional level and every player must begin somewhere.

Some of the greatest players our country has ever produced have come through the New South Wales Institute Of Sport (NSWIS).

NSWIS is a squad of elite players picked from their clubs at an age of fifteen or sixteen. It is a two year program where players are returned to their club on completion.

NSWIS is a combination of the physical, technical, psychological and educational part of the game and it is all designed as a preparation for life as a professional footballer.

The technical side outlines the simple aspects of the game which many clubs fail to address. These aspects include perfect use of both feet, such as driving the ball and controlling a ball. The ability to head a ball with the right technique as well as all parts of the body used in the game.

The physical component of NSWIS relates to the fitness side of the game, namely speed, strength, flexibility and endurance, which is so important in today's game. Physiological testing is conducted at a regular date to monitor the player's progress.

With strength, the players attend a gym once a week working on set individual programs to meet their own needs with a field strength session as well. Regular endurance training is conducted to ensure a high level of fitness for competitions.

The players' speed and agility is given close attention by regular sprint training sessions. Frequent stretching sessions take place to increase individual flexibility, helping players avoid injury.

Hints and advice about nutrition, match recovery and other physical sides of soccer are passed on to the players to help improve their performance.

The players are given a fantastic advantage over other young players around the world with unlimited access to

professional sports psychology.

They are given an insight into how to control their minds and set goals on and off the field, allowing, however large or small it may be, a greater performance on the field.

Athlete Career Education (ACE) is the program linked with NSWIS that helps the players balance their soccer with their education.

It is made essential that school is not neglected and life away from soccer is given enough attention.

I have been a player in the squad now for over ten months and I have no doubt in my mind that the NSWIS program is the most worthwhile activity I have ever done with my career.

I am currently under the guidance of Kelly Cross, Chris Minolsky and Chris Bradley and developed unbelievably as a player. I have had the opportunity to experience a number of positions at both ends of the field which will be a major plus for me further down the track.

The players have access to video analysis programs of such high quality, that clubs such as Manchester United have adopted it. Being young players, the video helps us learn from the rights and wrongs of

professionals who have already made it showing us where we want to be and how we need to get there.

The players have had the opportunity to speak to professionals such as Luke Casserly and Alistair Edwards who kindly give their insight into the game and their advice to us which is a very rare privilege for young players of age fifteen and sixteen.

The highlight of the NSWIS program for every player is a three-week tour of Europe where the squad tours Holland, Germany and Belgium. The boys are given the chance to play against the top clubs in Europe such as Ajax, Feyenoord and Bayer Leverkusen and experience a contrasting type of football culture.

This year we won nine out of the ten games we played and attended a Borussia Dortmund and Feyenoord first team game. It was certainly an unforgettable experience.

My age-group was born in 1988 which means we are the next Under 17 World Cup squad. Kelly, along with his staff put

in hours of their time to ensure as many players from the NSWIS squad as possible are selected in the Australian Joeys. The selection takes place at the Under 15 and Under 16 National Championships at Parklea.

The NSWIS physiologists plan carefully a fitness program allowing the NSWIS players to be at peak fitness at the championships meaning the best possible chance of their selection.

As I mentioned before, the NSWIS program is the best thing I have ever done with my life, and I have no regrets. Many players outside the program judge NSWIS as your free pass to professional football which is entirely false. The program is a lot of hard work and a huge commitment and even then you are not guaranteed of making it.

It then comes down to your effort and desire to make it but if you don't mind a bit of hard work and you take full advantage of what the NSWIS staff give to you, then anything is possible.



One of NSWIS rising stars Will Thom.



The 'Guv' of the NSWIS, coach Kelly Cross.

ACT WRAP

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Olympic's ACT Premiership hopes may now be of interest only to mathematicians, but the club demonstrated they would be a danger during the finals series with a 9-1 demolition of University of Canberra Pumas on Sunday.

True, the bottom-placed Pumas were not the best opposition, but the fact that six players got on the Olympic score sheet and the goals were spaced regularly throughout the game, will be heartening for player-coach Toplica Popovich as he looks forward to the catch-up contest with leaders Canberra Deakin tomorrow night.

Deakin needs just one point from this match and the game against lowly ANU next weekend to put the title beyond Olympic's reach. They could have finished it on Saturday, but instead were held to a 0-0 draw by a resilient Tuggeranong United. That point was enough to ensure United fills fourth spot in the play-offs.

Olympic's scorers ranged from 16-year-old Keith Mihalakis to 42-year-old super veteran Baz Giampaolo. Leading scorer Ellie Salloum led the way with a hat trick; Vince Bodo scored two while Popovich himself and fellow defender Elliot Zwangobani also weighed in.

The University, outmatched in midfield and with precious little incisiveness up front, put in their usual rearguard performance, and even managed a splattering of corners, largely though dogged persistence.

Their goal, coming from big Mark Dowling after

Olympic had found the net seven times, was an indication of their battling spirit.

Popovich said that with a mounting injury toll, he had been forced to use Giampaolo for the first time this season. "But as he showed today, you don't lose anything by having him on the field," the coach said.

Tuggeranong could easily have stolen the match against Deakin - Matt Menser found the back of the net but was judged offside - as it was they became just the third side this season to take a point from the league leader.

Canberra Deakin backed up with a 1-0 loss to NSL club Sydney United in a friendly at Deakin Oval on Sunday. The club's National Youth League side also began their preparation with a 3-1 loss to United's youth team.

ACT PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Canberra Deakin	16	13	3	0	48	8	42
Canberra Olympic	16	11	3	2	55	19	36
Gungahlin Juventus	16	10	4	2	55	26	34
Tuggeranong United	17	8	4	5	30	24	28
Cooma	17	5	6	6	32	32	21
Canberra City	17	4	7	6	28	30	19
Capital City Suns	16	6	1	9	23	40	19
Belconnen United	17	5	3	9	26	42	18
ANU	17	3	1	13	23	50	10
Uni of Canberra	17	0	4	13	11	58	4



VALE: Jacky Lennard

By Greg Stock

The Australian soccer community is poorer this week for the loss of former Socceroo Jacky Lennard after a brief illness.

The son of Percy Lennard, who made 13 appearances for Australia between 1923 and 1925, they became the first father/son combination to wear the green and gold shirt when Jacky made his national team debut on Saturday July 25 1953 against the touring Hong Kong Chinese side at the now defunct Sydney Showground.

Born in Newcastle on April 2nd 1930, the wily inside forward quickly came to prominence in the Cessnock junior ranks and debuted in the senior team in the late 1940's. He played over 300 senior games with the club baring a two year stint in the mid 1950's when he played for the Mayfield club. His teammates at Cessnock included Socceroos Cliff Almond and Kevin O'Neill who still fondly remember his tenacity and determination as a hallmark of his game.

"Jack was such a likeable chap, a thorough gentleman on and off the park and I can't ever remember him being sent off in a game," said Almond. "He was a great attacking player and would sit in behind the centre forward and wait for opportunities. He didn't score all that many goals but when he hit one, they stayed in."

A fixture in the N.S.W. representative team between 1951 and 1959, Lennard's greatest footballing moment came in 1956 when he was selected to represent Australia at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. He played in both matches, the 2-0 win over Japan and the 4-2 loss to India which eliminated the Socceroos. All up he made 18 appearances for 3 goals, his last match against Scottish club side Hearts in Sydney on May 9 1959. In ten of those matches his friend and Cessnock teammate Kevin O'Neill played alongside.

"Jacky was a terrific player, a real hard-working type who never gave in," said O'Neill. "He had speed and skill and could set up a nice ball for the forwards as well as knock in a few goals himself. Outside of soccer he was one of the friendliest guys you'd ever meet, a thorough gentleman who will be sadly missed."

After retiring from the game in the early 1960's Lennard took up residence in the Newcastle area coaching a number of junior teams. He was involved with his old club Cessnock for a while as well as the Police Boys clubs helping what he termed 'the next generation of footballers'. He continued to work as an electrician at the Pelton Colliery just west of Cessnock up until retirement. He passed away in early August after a short illness and is survived by his wife June and 4 children.

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Hawkesbury City Soccer Club



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The Secretary
Hawkesbury City Soccer Club Ltd
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Applications must be received by 20th September 2003

Further details, if required, can be obtained from David Bertenshaw (Phone 0413 009 008) or Sue McNally (Phone 0419 694 507)

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Farina to experiment against Jamaica

A 2-1 loss to Ireland recently came at a cost for Frank Farina and the Socceroos with central defenders, Tony Popovic and Hayden Foxe both sustaining injuries.

This has given Farina something to think about with a friendly against Jamaica lined up for Sunday.

It looks as if Farina may have to pick-and-choose from a very inexperienced bunch of young players with Craig Moore also out with a hamstring strain.

Farina has the option of the veteran line-up consisting of the likes of Tony Vidmar and Kevin Muscat. The situation isn't critical with the likes of Shaw Murphy and Steve Laybutt, who have played many times for Australia, available.

However, it is definitely not certain how long these players

will still be involved in the game and Farina must start to decide whether to use this game against Jamaica as an experiment for the long-term future or a short-term fix.

With the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign just around the corner, Farina may



David Tarka: Could don a Socceroo spot in the next friendly match against the Jamaicans.

need to start thinking about a back-up plan if his experienced defenders such as Moore and Popovic will not be available.

Farina hasn't got a fantastic field of young players to choose from, with a vast majority struggling for regular first team football or are currently in pre-season mode.

One of the main candidates



**In Memory of our Dearest Husband,
Father and Grand Father (NONO)**

John Ivan Arambasic

Kalgoorlie 2/02/39

Passed away 11a.m. 30th August, 2003. Sydney

However, if there was ever a match where Farina shouldn't panic about team selection it should be this one.

With no disrespect to Jamaica, the Reggae Boys will provide a less prestigious and competitive occasion in comparison to England and Ireland meaning a perfect opportunity for the Socceroos to provide debuts for a few young faces.



Funeral Service will be held at St Thomas More's Parish, 298 Bay St, Brighton Le Sands at 10.30a.m. 3rd of September, 2003.

Following the service, the cortège will proceed to the Woronora Cemetery, Sutherland.

Died peacefully with his family by his side after battling Lewy Body Disease for 9 years.

He will be sadly missed and always remembered for his strong fighting spirit, his love of family life and passion for life and Soccer.

You will remain in our hearts forever.

Thank you Dad for the Love and Time we shared together as a family.

Goodbye my Love — Your Wife Rosa (RUZA)

Your Son and Daughter in Law Zlatko and Lori, Daughter & Son in Law Mariana & George and your Grand children Matea, Frances, Marco & Alexander.



Sutherland Shire Junior Soccer Football Association

And

Sydney Olympic

REPRESENTATIVE COACHES

U11 and U12

U13, U14, U15, U16, U18

W12, W14, W16

Metropolitan League

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Girls Youth League

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Addressed to:

The Secretary
S.S.J.S.F.A.
P.O. Box 188
GYMEA

Email:

ssjfainc@bigpond.com

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Grant Lee looks ahead to the new season

By Joe Russo

Grant Lee has been handed the role of coaching Sydney United for the upcoming season in what should be an interesting baptism of fire for the latest novice coach in the NSL.

Three Sydney teams, Marconi with Jean Paul De Marigny, Sydney Olympic with Peter Papanikitas and Sydney United with Lee, have all decided to take a punt on a coach making his NSL debut.

Lee, however, is certainly no stranger to the NSL; as a player he had a long career at the now defunct Sydney City from 1979, followed by Sydney Olympic from 1987.

He finally gave the game away, having last played for Olympic in 1996, before embarking on his coaching journey which now culminates with him taking charge of Sydney United.

Lee's coaching has mainly been at junior level but nevertheless he has dealt with some of the best youngsters in recent years to come through the Australian game.

His coaching has so far included: three years at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, two stints with Soccer NSW

including work with the Elite Squad Program, Youth teams at Parramatta Power and all the relevant coaching certificates, are just some of the entries on his rather impressive coaching CV.

So why now Sydney United? Some would say it is the most volatile coaching bench, after perhaps Sydney Olympic, in the entire NSL. Coaches that have failed

talking to the committee and perhaps trying to change their way of thinking," he said.

"We needed a different structure and plan and all credit where it is due because they [the committee] made a very big decision. They needed a coach to look at the structure of the club from the juniors all the way to the seniors."

"A lot of coaches have been ex players who go straight into the club structure without doing anything else. I feel I'm well prepared having gone back and done a lot of work especially in junior development and at the AIS where we were dealing with the cream of the available talent."

- Grant Lee

are quickly shown the door. And even ones that have succeeded are often shown the door.

"I don't have any background with the club but I was fortunate that Tony Pezzano [Sydney United's assistant coach] was

Lee is not nervous about being a rookie coach going into his first NSL season. He believes his work in junior development will hold him in good stead.

"A lot of coaches have been ex players who go straight into the club structure

without doing anything else. I feel I'm well prepared having gone back and done a lot of work especially in junior development and at the AIS where we were dealing with the cream of the available talent," Lee said.

"There were a lot of different experiences and opportunities at the AIS, including working with different coaches who came out here such as Terry Venables and Roy Hodgson."

The NSL this season isn't going to be an easy ride for any team except perhaps Parramatta Power and Perth Glory. Uncertainty over the future of the competition and limited budgets have impacted on just about every club.

"It is going to be a difficult year for us. Frank Lowy's board has just taken over and it will be interesting to see the direction the league is going to take with all the planned reforms."

On the whole Lee is realistic about the potential of his Sydney United team this season but he is still as competitive as

ever. He won't be satisfied just making up the numbers; Sydney United are here to compete and Lee has a point to prove by unearthing some promising young players.

"It is a rebuilding phase for us. However, we are going out there to compete and I'd be very disappointed if we don't make the top six," Lee said.

"We haven't got a big squad and we really can't afford to go out there and buy the big names. I'm going to try and give some of the young boys a go."

"We have a lot of players who are still only about 23 years old yet they have had a few years experience, such as Michael Santalab and Michael Cunico. I am looking forward to seeing Paul Ivanic from Canberra and a promising 18 year old from Sydney Olympic Labinot Haliti."

"There is also Liam Reddy as goalkeeper and he is very keen to fit in. He's a good character and is very talented. I've had him before in the juniors at Parramatta Power and he will be a valuable addition to our squad."



Kingz target Chelsea stars

Football Kingz will be boosted by two Chelsea players on loan this season.

The arrangement is part of the Kingz's formal partnership with the London giants. CEO Chris Turner is likely to hold talks with Chelsea last week while in the UK.

"We have made it clear we are looking for a central defender and another striker," Turner told the NZ Herald.

"Under the partnership with Chelsea we can expect two players of a high standard to fill those roles."

It's been no secret that Chelsea have been the biggest spenders in this year's English Premier League under new boss Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich.

"Big bad Rom" has created somewhat of a new 'Roman' empire and has spent an estimated 100 million pounds on new players this season.

Thirty-two players are currently on the books at Stamford Bridge and two are said to be on their ways to



chilly New Zealand as part of a loan deal with the two clubs.

The club recently purchased the signing of gifted Argentinean striker Hernan Crespo from Inter, yet another indication that Chelsea mean business this year.

The Kingz have also been financially boosted by the investment of new shareholder Brian Katzen, who is also heavily involved with Swansea City.

Like the Kingz, Swansea are establishing a relationship with Chelsea and Turner will hold talks with the Welsh club about strengthening links between the two clubs.

Speculation also has the Kingz entering a sponsorship agreement with airline giants Emirates, which are also sponsors of Chelsea.

The Kingz had Vodafone as their last sponsors but with this new partnership with the Blues, the rich Saudi Arabian airline could well be evident on the black and white jerseys of Kenny Dugdale's team this coming National League season.

By Will Thom

Out of the 400 schools that played in round one, we're down to just two in the New South Wales Puma Cup knockout.

Epping Boys High School last won the competition in 1992 but since then, Westfields Sports High has been victorious every single year.

It was fitting that they should come across each other in the competition, which they did in the semi-finals on August 21st.

Melita Stadium was the venue for both of the semi-finals beginning with Epping's clash with Westfields.

Epping started the brighter of the two sides, peppering the Westfields goal with some great long-range efforts. The Westfields goalkeeper, Brodie Crane was having his work cut out and was the difference between Epping being ahead on the scoreboard as opposed to a goalless affair.

However, Epping were stopped in their tracks when against the run of play, Devon Bonne calmly put Westfields ahead after some sloppy Epping defence. Epping restored composure and continued to press but were unable to capitalise on heap of chances.

The teams went in at the break at 1-0 with Epping having plenty to think about. Epping were quickest out of the blocks once again, and their persistence paid off when

Jordan Simpson was tripped inside the Westfields penalty area, only minutes after the restart. Matthew Peatey showed no nerves what so ever to smash the ball home from the spot off the underside of the cross bar.

Only minutes later, Epping found themselves ahead after a sweeping move was finished superbly by Jordan Simpson.

Westfields had been stunned and were down after only seven minutes

of the second half. However, Epping refused to sit back. Jordan Simpson went on another mazing run in the Westfields penalty box, this time cutting the ball back.

Stephen Fotiadis calmly slotted the ball in the top corner, completely sinking Westfields hopes of a birth in the Grand Final.

This time Epping sat back on their lead as Westfields bombarded the Epping penalty box only to meet a barricade of Epping shirts.

Epping conquer Westfields in Puma Cup

By Will Thom

Jordan Simpson was tripped inside the Westfields penalty area, only minutes after the restart. Matthew Peatey showed no nerves what so ever to smash the ball home from the spot off the underside of the cross bar.

Stephen Fotiadis calmly slotted the ball in the top corner, completely sinking Westfields hopes of a birth in the Grand Final.

This time Epping sat back on their lead as Westfields bombarded the Epping penalty box only to meet a barricade of Epping shirts.

Epping held on comfortably in the end to record a historical victory over their rivals, and move into the final.

Epping will meet Lampden High School from Newcastle in the final after they defeated Prairiewood High School 2-1 in the other semi-final.

The two teams will fight it out for the top soccer school in the state on Thursday 4th September at Melita Stadium.

South sign Greek International

South Melbourne continue to make the headlines weeks out from the new season securing Greek international Michael Panopoulos.

Panopoulos has signed for South after stints in Greece with Aris, England with Portsmouth and Scotland with Dundee United and Dundee.

The midfield player who originated in Australia was chased by the Socceroos but played for the Greek Olympic team securing six caps for his country.

Panopoulos has returned to

Australia due to family issues and is adamant that coach Stuart Munro



has assembled a strong squad for the upcoming season.

"I'm very excited to be involved at South Melbourne. It's the club I supported as a kid, I'm quietly impressed by the squad and the manager we've got."

"And I'm especially taken by the great environment in the dressing room", Panopoulos told the Herald-Sun last week.

Panopoulos is keen on returning to the European leagues but is happy in Australia back with his family and is looking forward to a strong season with South Melbourne.



Queensland Lions Soccer Club

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Queensland Cup Final *By Glenn Davis*

LIONS TAKE OUT QLD FINAL

Premiers Queensland Lions collected its second piece of silver and are on track for successive trebles after a thrilling extra time 2-1 win over Palm Beach in the Queensland Cup final at Spencer Park on Sunday.

Lions, who won the premiership, grand final and Queensland Cup last year, came from behind to snatch victory with a golden goal from striker Greg Di Losa in the third minute of extra time.

Palm Beach, which face Lions again next week in the home and away legs of the premier league semi-finals, took an early lead after Alec Panic netted in the 15th minute.

However, Lions fought back late in the half when Di Losa scored two minutes from half time.

The second half remained scoreless and went into golden goal extra time before Di Losa sealed victory for Lions with a one-two off Reece Tollenaere inside the box.

Lions coach Miron Bleiberg said it was a tough final but he was never worried about not winning the Queensland Cup trophy.

"Credit to Palm Beach especially after they lost an experienced player early in the game when Karl Dodd was hurt in a bad tackle from Ross Davidson," Bleiberg said.

"They should be praised for taking us to extra time but I never doubted we wouldn't win."

Palm Beach coach Bobby Hamilton had no complaints from his side's effort but believed the game could have gone either

way.

"Their keeper Jason Lucas made a superb save in the first half to stop us from going 2-nil up," Hamilton said.

"The ball was just about over the line when somehow he got a finger to it and tipped it over.

"There weren't many chances from either side in the second half but I thought we had the best late in the game but again Lucas saved brilliantly.

"Lions are a very strong side and had two players who played with the Brisbane Strikers last season sitting on the bench."

Palm Beach faces a tall order to reverse the result in the semi-final against Lions next week with likely loss of striker Peter Gierson and the injured Dodd.

"Peter and Carl have signed for the Strikers and have been doing pre-season training with them and are feeling a bit tired," Hamilton said.

"Peter told me the Queensland Cup would be his last game and I won't be pressuring him to change his mind and I'm not sure whether Carl will be fit anyway.

"We've only just got a squad and have had a lot of injuries this year but I'll leave the final decision with Peter whether he wants to play in the semi-finals."

Bleiberg is extremely confident Lions can go on to equalise last year's feat in the grand final.

"There's no doubt in my mind we can go on and do the job," he said.

"Brisbane City are probably the team to beat now but we only recently beat them 4-nil."

"If the final was at Spencer Park it might be different as their ground isn't in the best shape but it's at Perry Park."

Meanwhile one of Queensland's oldest clubs Mitchelton will join the premier league next season for the first time in its history after winning the promotion-relegation battle against Ipswich Knights.

Mitchelton won the first leg 3-nil at its home at Teralba Park last Wednesday then held Ipswich to a nil-nil draw at Eric Evans Oval at Bundamba on Saturday.

Ipswich coach Andy Ogden congratulated Mitchelton, which was runner up to Easts in first division, on its promotion.

"Over the two games they were the better side," Ogden said.

"In the first game we were terrible and didn't have a good player on the night and all three goals they scored were soft."

Ipswich faced a monumental task in the second leg to turn around a 3-nil loss and any hopes of a victory were ruined when referee Paul Aldridge sent two Ipswich players off just after half time.

Former State rep Ken Caldwell was given his marching orders ten minutes after the interval when he reacted to a Mitchelton challenge while Clint Scott was sent five minutes later for his second booking.

"I hate saying it but it was the same old story in the second leg although we had two

sent off," Ogden said.

"They dominated in the first game and scored three goals and we dominated the second game and got nothing and hit the post twice."

Ogden is yet to decide his coaching future and will let the dust settle on Ipswich's relegation before talking about next season with club officials.

"It wasn't the play-off games which relegated us this year," he said.

"All season we haven't been quite good enough."

"There were numerous games we were the better side but we couldn't finish off teams."

The Knights' always faced an uphill battle to stay in premier league after losing several key players from last season's side which finished fifth in the competition.

"We lost Matt and Richard Hilli to Toowoomba, Stu Drinkeld went to Lions and Peter Hinks went overseas," Ogden said.

"Brenley Jefferd made a comeback during the season but he only played a few games before he hurt a knee and was out for the season needing a reconstruction."

"Those players accounted for about 90 per cent of our goals last season and we just didn't have the depth to replace them."

Ogden is hopeful Ipswich can emulate Easts who was relegated last season after losing the play-off to Souths.

"Easts lost the play-off last season and got relegated under Col Bennett but they spent



Victorious winning Lions coach Miron Bleiberg.

some money in first division getting the right players and came straight back up," he said.

"I'd like to think we could do the same. I'm still keen to coach next year but I'll wait a few weeks before I talk with the club."

"I want to know what direction they plan to take for the future."

Ogden, 41, was in his second season this year as the Knights' first-side coach after a long playing stint with the club and coming through the lower grade coaching ranks.

INVITING CLASHES FOR AUSSIES AFTER EUROPEAN CUP DRAWS MADE

Qantas Socceroo Craig Moore is Australia's only representative in the European Champions League this season and will be involved in two of the biggest matches of the season, already being dubbed 'the Battle of Britain' by the British press.

Moore's team Glasgow Rangers has drawn English Champions Manchester United in Group E, along with Panathinaikos (Greece) and VfB Stuttgart (Germany), with all eyes on the first clash between the two British heavyweights on October 22 at the Ibrox in Glasgow.

The central defender will almost certainly play an integral part in the Rangers European Champions League campaign and he will not be joined by Qantas Socceroo teammate Kevin Muscat, who yesterday transferred to English Nationwide Division One side Millwall on a free transfer.

Meanwhile there are a host of Australian's involved in the UEFA Cup, with several of them set to face one another. The most interesting tie is between Genclerbirligi and Blackburn Rovers, which pits Qantas Socceroo teammates Josip Skoko for the



Craig Moore: Socceroo star set to play in the Champions League.

Turkish side up against Lucas Neill and Brett Emerton in the Blackburn side.

Skoko was bought by the Turkish side, because of European experience with Racing Genk in the Champions League last season, while Emerton was a member of the Feyenoord side that won this trophy two season's ago, although he missed the final due to suspension.

Another game that will potentially see Australian's on the opposite side of the park will be Dundee against Perugia. Mark Robertson is still yet to make inroads at Dundee as a regular first team squad member, although the same can't be said of Qantas Socceroo goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac at his Italian club, after keeping six clean sheets, to guide Perugia through the Inter-Toto Cup and into the UEFA Cup.

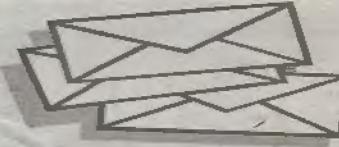
Other Qantas Socceroos involved in the UEFA Cup include Harry Kewell with his team Liverpool up against NK Olimpija Ljubljana from Slovenia, Danny Tiatto's Manchester City will play Belgium's KSC Lokeren, Marco Bresciano's Parma side travels away to FC Metalurh Donetsk in the Ukraine first up and Scott Chipperfield's FC Basel travels to Turkey to take on Malatyaspor.

Along with Kalac, Australian goalkeeper's feature heavily with Michael Petkovic's Trabzonspor facing a difficult tie against Spain's Villarreal, Joe Didulica's Austria Vienna up against German giants Borussia Dortmund, while Kyriakos Tohouroglou will be between the sticks for his Greek side PAOK against Norway's SFK Lyn.

The remaining players to feature in the Cup will be Joel Griffiths and Naoki Imaya for their Swiss side Neuchatel Xamax when they play French side Auxerre, while Patrick Kisnorbo will be hoping to get some action with Hearts when they play NK Zeljeznaric from Bosnia.

Source - Soccer Australia

Letters to the Editor



Soccer Claims Number 1 Spot

Dear Sir,

A recent report claimed that Soccer was now the No.1 participation sport in Australia for males with women's Soccer making great strides as well.

This has all happened during another bout of turmoil at S.A. which included the introduction of a highly controversial levy on all Soccer players.

The levy was received with a massive hysterical and misleading campaign to derail it. The reality is that the levy is long overdue and is arguably one of the few financially sound decisions made by Soccer Australia for many a year.

Because Soccer in Australia has always been a fringe game it has always been underfunded not surprising when you have no reliable or regular revenue source of significance. Paradoxically and for many years Oz Soccer has had this vast and growing number of recreational Soccer players young, old, male and new female.

However unlike the Rugby League, Union and AFL counterparts the recreational Soccer players for the most part

contribute little or nothing to the advancement of Soccer in Australia. This is especially the case in the states of NSW and Qld where the number of players is greatest. Critics always blame S.A. for this situation but a closer examination of the function of junior and recreational Soccer tells another story.

Unfortunately far to many recreational Soccer players, their families and even many of the officials have a very limited interest in Soccer especially those in NSW and Qld. Very often their involvement with Soccer is only of a short-term expedient nature from day one that S.A. should impose what is only a modest levy on people who are only using Soccer on a short-term basis because it is convenient is both fair and reasonable.

As for the recreational players who are genuine Soccer people they should be thankful that S.A. is now extracting some income from these freeloaders who are just using Soccer on a short-term basis.

It is now more than one hundred years since the now defunct Granville Soccer

Club established the Granville Junior Association for recreational players of all ages. Granville Junior Associations till going strong (founded 1902) was the model for the vast network of Soccer Associations and recreational Soccer clubs that exist today across NSW, ACT, Qld and beyond.

In that time countless players have come and gone to suit themselves all indications are this will continue indefinitely. The only difference the levy makes is that for the first time ever S.A. now has a significant and reliable revenue source from what has been for most of the time an unproductive asset.

Being the astute businessman he is I am sure Frank Lowy well knows the value of the levy. Whatever Ian Knops failing during his time as S.A. supremo the introduction of the players levy was a very significant milestone something that should have been done by one of his many predecessors years ago.

Robert Melor,
Bondi, NSW.

WHAT HAS LOWY DONE?

Dear Sir,

After all the excitement about introducing Frank Lowy as chairman of Soccer Australia, I speak for many people in saying that he has done squat!

Really, it's been close to two months now and I've seen no improvement in the National League or anything involving Soccer here in Australia.

Everyone gave him a chance at the beginning in allowing himself to adjust to being the leader of soccer in this nation, but enough is enough, we need answers!

I have yet to see a report or any news stories from Lowy himself, where is he hiding?

Frank Lowy: Soccer Australia Chairman. I know I might be cynical in my writing but I really hate when people hype up something that frankly at the end doesn't happen.

Come on Lowy and board, lift your game, I mean there's only 4 weeks till the National League kick's off, no rush!

Damien Mouyis
Box Hill, Victoria.

GO THE POWER

Dear Sir,

How good does this season shape up to be with the Parramatta Power.

The squad looks prim and fit for a big year, new signings, and good ones at that has been highly evident this season.

Rech, Colosimo, Gumprecht, Dodd, Beltrame, Milicic, what names!

I think that this will be the year of the Power, fingers crossed that the club stays in the league next year as well.

I've gone and watched the Power play a few friendly matches and although results haven't gone their way, the squad is looking pretty good – all they need is time and they will be an unbeatable side.

Shaun Higgins,
Kellyville, NSW.



ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Dear Sir,

Here's one for Frank Lowy to think about next time Soccer Australia organize a meeting. It would be a spectacle to see a National League club take part in the Asian Champions League from next year onwards.

Having our best take part in Asia would be the best thing for this game. Promoting the game in any way shape or form in regards to this would certainly raise the profile of the sport. Look at how the Super 12's have succeeded in doing that.

I read in your paper a few months back that former Olympic Sharks chairman Nick Politis stated that the only way soccer will survive in this country is if it integrates with the Asian sector.

This is very true, that market is huge and doing it will be for the good of the game.

Mario Cleto,
Five Dock, NSW.

LIVER-FOOL

Dear Sir,

I know this is a forum that most topics that are discussed are on the National League but I'd like to take the attention off that and venture off to the English Premier League.

It's been a great event, the goals, the games, football is back where it belongs, every Monday's on SBS watching the Premier League show is such a buzz.

I'm an avid Liverpool supporter and I've been rather upset with the sides recent results lately.

The side itself has the makings of a good team but it rarely has been seen.

What is wrong with Houllier?
If there's anyone that needs to go its him.

Apart from Kewell, no one else has been bought into the squad. What do the fans expect, they want and need better players. I hope that we do gain this as I fear for the worst.

I fear that we could end up on the bottom half of the ladder – please lets not hope that but at this rate, that is where we look like finishing up.

James Lavelle,
Bondi, NSW.



A future Socceroo –
Alex Wilkinson?

Dear Sir,

As one of the letters in a past edition of ABSW indicated, the Socceroos are suffering from a lack of depth and quality in the heart of the defence.

While Muscat, Vidmar, Murphy and Popovic have played with distinction for the Socceroos on the odd occasion of an international fixture, I do feel that they need support from younger players.

YOUTH IS THE KEY FOR ROOS

As the next World Cup qualifiers approach, Farina simply must look at bringing in alternatives for these positions, and these players may be stretching it by playing in 2006, providing Australia qualifies.

Regular fixtures with opponents of contrasting qualities will give Farina the chance to play the likes of Milicevic, Foxe, Wilkinson and Tarka.

By playing more games, Farina can relax a bit with his selections and take risks, with the knowledge that he is working towards an objective, rather than ensuring a competitive performance in a one-off friendly.

David Hay,
Carlingford, NSW.

LEAVE KEWELL ALONE

Dear Sir,

I know most Soccer supporters are sick of hearing about Harry Kewell, considering the off season just passed, but I think Gerard Houllier at Liverpool can do a lot better to get the best out of him.

Liverpool play with an ultra conservative system, and Kewell's creative talents are going to waste. What on earth is he doing patrolling the right hand side of midfield?

If you look at replays of the past two matches, one will notice that Kewell has had two major opportunities, and missed

them both because they fell on his weaker side.

If he had been playing on the left, he would have buried these opportunities and Liverpool supporters would be breathing a lot easier at the moment.

Houllier has a habit of making big name purchases and not utilising their skills and abilities. He needs to recognise how important a player like Kewell is in his very average team.

Rob Maddocks,
Broadway, NSW.

SOCER RULES

Dear Sir,

I'm writing in to discuss the issue of this guy called Peter Fitzsimons. This is the man if you recall in ABSW last week that felt the need to call soccer "a sleeping giant".

I want to know who this guy thinks he's kidding? He wishes that rugby could be half the game that soccer is and it is quite obvious that I'm not alone on this topic as well because soccer is the world game.

I realize that Soccer doesn't have the same publicity as Rugby in this country but it was only a few weeks ago that Soccer was named the most popular youth sport in Australia.



I should also take this opportunity to tell Soccer Australia to pick it up because they are the ones giving Fitzsimons this opportunity to knock our sport.

I'm also disgusted by those who believe that Rugby takes more skill than Soccer. I receive a lot of stick from my friends that all play Rugby because they believe Rugby is a harder game. I never heard such a load of rubbish. You tell me, what is harder?

Running with a ball in your hands or running with a ball at your feet? I rest my case Peter!

From The email
Neil Brooks, Unley, South Australia.

Dani's European Vacation



by Daniela Raco

Even the hardworking staff at 'ABSW' are allowed a holiday!! At the close of the 2002-2003 NSL season, I ventured abroad for some much needed R & R.

Without 'ABSW' to keep me busy, I headed to the Netherlands and Spain and soaked up the football sights that both beautiful countries had to offer.

The two were different in style and in structure. In Holland, I had the pleasure of venturing to Dutch Giants Ajax Amsterdam's home-ground, the

'Amsterdam Arena' whereby I was met with a colossal and hi-tech stadium built for not only football matches, but massive dance parties and concerts as well.

Having looked around the ground of the Dutch side, one could not help but wonder how much such a stadium would cost.

Spain was another story all together.

Two of the finest footballing sides in the world, Real Madrid and rivals Barcelona was also another spectacle that I was fortunate enough to see that I will never forget.

'Barca's Nou Camp and Madrid's Bernabeu were simply outstanding.

The trophy cabinet in Real's Stadium was a sight certainly worth seeing. They've won everything under the sun.

One of the highlights of my trip was when my squad lined-up in a team photo with Real - See for yourself in the photo gallery.

Below is some happy-snaps I took upon my football adventure in Europe where I got my weekly fix of soccer - Enjoy the Photos.



Shown above is the Ajax Amsterdam logo hoisted above the beautiful Amsterdam Arena.



The new Real Madrid line-up for season 2003/04, with yours truly sitting fourth on the right hand side of the bottom.



Ajax Amsterdam's press conference room.



An image of the Champions League trophy inside Real Madrid's trophy room.



The 'Nou Camp' shown in its full glory on match day.

Madrid's famous Bernabeu Stadium.



Just some of the many trophies on display in Real Madrid's winning cabinet.

Wollongong News

By Otto Bader

Wolves Thrust Forward

A sense of excitement and anticipation is obvious at the club. Preparations under new coach John Turner are going well - vibes from players, management, supporters, neutrals are all positive.

Around 2000 plus soccer fans turned up at Lysaght's Sports Centre for a trial run with Parramatta Power and were overjoyed with the outcome (1:1).

Several players were rotated and showed promise to look forward with confidence to the NSL competition proper and a possible contract with the club.

Wolves General Manager Robert Rossi - rather youthful leader of the club management team - shows enthusiasm reserved for young upcoming starters, ready to move mountains. He is going out of his ways to create real communication channels with the local soccer fraternity, working hard to win over supporters in numbers.

A rather tough talk one may say, however he is making steady progress, trying to attract business sponsors for the club. Various public activities are planned like on Saturday 6/9, a players launch in the Wollongong shopping mall from 11:30 AM to 1 PM with plenty of entertainment. Robert Rossi hopes being ready to parade a new designed playing strip for the Wolves. The players will be introduced to mingle with the fans. Negotiations behind the scene are followed with steady progress to secure a major Wolves sponsor soon, details to be announced in due time.

Coach John Turner is finalising his

playing staff of about 18 to 20 players this week. Every single position in his team is covered with competition for a spot in the starting eleven fierce indicating healthy contests among players.



Friendlies are still being arranged on the two remaining weekends before the competition starts on Friday 19/9, at WIN Stadium 7:30 PM against Sydney United. The Wolves supporters can look forward to a well prepared side under new coach John Turner - ready to tackle any opponent with vigour.

Winners In Premier & Conference League

In Premier League Port Kembla was crowned as minor premier actually some rounds before the final matches - now over a decade under coach Adrian Alston. Previously Port was League Champion 2001, 2000, 1995, Grand Final winners also 2000, 1999 as well as 1995 and 1996.

Port's Reserve Grade finished in 4th spot and Port's Youth Grade is also Minor Premiers after 22 rounds. A proud achievement by Port Kembla Soccer Club, now aiming in the play-offs to reach another Grand Final.

2nd in the table after 22 rounds is surprisingly Dapto - a newly promoted

club to Premier League this year under coach Stuart Beedie who did achieve a not expected top position.

3rd on the table is Kembla Warra, last year's league champions, not quite the result coach John Fleming was looking for. The Club's Youth Grade reached 3rd spot also.

Kembla Warra have to overcome second placed Dapto if they wish to advance in the play-offs.

4th is Coniston Lions after a win in the last round with coach Greg Goodfellow, slightly disappointed with a mid-season form slump. The club's Reserve Grade is the League Champion and the Youth Grade is in 5th spot.

5th spot is taken by Wollongong Olympic with a draw in the last round - entitled to contest the race for the Grand Final. Coach Peter Beggs had a hard time to deal with suspensions and injuries of key players when needed most.

For the remaining clubs from 6th to 12th position the season is over, all it's left to look back on lost opportunities. In Reserve Grade Tarrawanna and Albion Park WE are in the play-offs series from these clubs. In Youth Grade Picton Rangers and Cringila Lions are still in the hunt while their first grade closes up activities for this year.

Grand Finals

Dates for the end-of-season highlights are for Conference League on Sunday 21/9, at Balls Paddock, Bulli. Premier League Grand Final is on Sunday 28/9, at WIN Stadium to celebrate the Centenary of Soccer in Illawarra - 1903 to 2003.

Coach John Turner is finalising his

By Graham Cooke

Gungahlin Juventus are hoping that a possible deal with a local bocce club will end half a century of homelessness.

Currently in their jubilee season, Juventus are the oldest and most successful club in the ACT with 12 Premierships, but in 50 years they have not found a per-

manent home. In recent times they have added the name of Canberra's newest town, Gungahlin, and begun a junior club in the area, but have so far been unable to persuade the ACT Government to grant them permanent facilities there.

That may change if an agreement with the Canberra Bocce Club comes to fruition.

The bocce players have their courts and club facilities at Kaleen in south Belconnen, but suffer from the competition of three other licensed clubs nearby and are anxious to sell up and move into a new area.

They are looking at a site in the Amaroo Shopping Centre in Gungahlin, which is only a couple of hundred metres from three newly formed soccer fields. The partnership between the two organisations would seem to have advantages for all sides.

The deal is being brokered by the ACT Opposition's Spokesman on Sport, Bill Stefaniak, and long time soccer supporter Laurie Pastrello. Mr Stefaniak said the soccer pitches would be perfect for Juventus while a link with the bocce club would be beneficial for both.

"It would provide extra members for the licensed premises while giving Juventus the home they have been looking for," he said. "These new pitches will take the strain off the rest of the facilities at Gungahlin, and the Government could save money by handing over the pitches to Juventus to maintain."

"I see it as a win for everyone." Juventus president Tony Fusca was more cautious. "The time is ripe for us to move to a set geographical location, but for the moment we are just interested observers," he said.

"The bocce club will have the money from the sale of their current premises, so it is really up to them."

SOUTH AUSTRALIA FINAL ROUND RESULTS

Fairmont Bianco Top 5 Soccer Series

Results week 2 Saturday 30th August 2003 - Hindmarsh Stadium.

Premier League - First Semi Final

Raiders 1 Adelaide Galaxy 3

Best Players.

Raiders:
Bill Kampeis
Robert Matosevic
Sam Barbero

Galaxy:
Sasha Utešenović
Steven Kidd
Michael Rodesthenous

Goal-Scorers Goal-Scorers
Raiders
Jason Trimboli

Galaxy:
T O G
Paul Karithevski
Michael Cartwright

PREMIER LEAGUE - Second Semi Final

MetroStars 3 Adelaide BE 2

Best Players.

Metro:
Ryan Moore
Vince Schimizzi
David Menechella

Blue Eagles:
Paul Pezos
Pablo Cesar Duran
Nick Budin

Goal-Scorers
Metro:
Frank Sergi
Vince Schimizzi
David Menechella

Blue Eagles
Pablo Cesar Duran
Nick Budin

STATE LEAGUE Under 23
First Semi Final.

Panthers 2 Adelaide Hills 0

Best Players.

NA

Goal-Scorers Goal-Scorers
Panthers:
A McGrath
S Koehne

STATE LEAGUE Under 23
Second Semi Final.

Campbelltown City 2 Northern Demons 2

Best Players
Campbelltown
R. Calabria
V. Missiameo
A. Leshi

N.Demons
L. Sarraceno
N. Young
A. Amey

Goal-Scorers Goal-Scorers
Campbelltown
F. Florento
R. Calabria
A. Farina

N.Demons
J. Dibbens
M. Bellitemini

STATE LEAGUE Under 19
Second Semi Final

Panthers 1 Noarlunga Utd 1

Best Players.

NA

Goal-Scorers
Panthers
S. Kestell
TOG

Noarlunga
D. Sweeny

News From The National Capital

By Graham Cooke

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Meanwhile, Juventus have had a win off the field with their request to Inter Milan for a compensation fee for Carl Valeri, a former club junior currently playing for the Italian giant.

"I suppose they could have brushed us aside, but instead they sent us 8000 euros, which is better than a kick in the pants," Fusca said.

The consortium seeking to secure an NSL Franchise for Canberra has hit a road block with its first concrete proposal - to take over the decaying Phillip Oval, on the edge of the Woden Town Centre, for soccer.

Responding to this and other rumours about the future of the oval, ACT Planning Minister Simon Corbell said he would not allow any development on the facility that would affect its use as an oval for Australian Rules football.

"Public consultation recognised the need to retain a full-sized Australian Rules playing surface at this site," Mr Corbell said. "The Government supports this."

"We've got plenty of square pitches around town, but we're running out of ovals and we need to retain those we have got."

Planning regulations currently specify that the oval is for the use of Australian Rules football and even a change to another code would require the Minister's agreement and a vote in the Legislative Assembly, something that is obviously not going to happen.

There is no denying that Phillip has been neglected since local Rules switched

their main venue to Manuka Oval, but a leading figure in the code pointed out that Manuka is principally a cricket ground, cannot be developed further, is barred from having lights, and fans have to compete with the cafe society at the nearby Manuka Shopping Centre for parking spaces.

"If the code is to progress we will have to return to Phillip one day," the figure said.

Sources in the ACT bureaucracy also noted that soccer has already had plenty of favours from the Government, including the award of an exclusive lease on Hawker Oval to Soccer Canberra, allowing Belconnen Soccer Club's McKellar development in the face of opposition from some residents, and a new support deal for the Kanga Cup junior international tournament.

All this does not necessarily bar a Canberra NSL club playing at Phillip during the summer months, but it would have to be as a sub-lessee from the ACT Australian Football League, which would own any improvements to the facilities.

Canberra Olympic's Takis Arvanitis has retired from playing with a knee injury and will shortly leave Canberra to be closer to his girlfriend in Sydney.

Once one of the local game's steadiest and most reliable defenders, he has been spending this season helping out behind the scenes with Olympic's successful top-four campaign in the ACT Premiership.

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PREMiership BIZARRO

It's Nige and Derek from BananaTV's Premiership Bizarro. Each week we give you the no-nonsense news and our views, from around the grounds of the English Premier League.

We kick off this week with the EPL's players' and officials' obsession with smashing up the players' tunnel. This new syndrome started last season with Joe Cole's infamous incident at The Reebok Stadium when he took out his relegation frustration on the tunnel. This week the Players' Tunnel Syndrome has struck again when Blackburn Doctor, Phil Batty went batty with a locked dressing room door. Bonkers Batty had such a bad attack of PTS that he ripped the door of its hinges to let the freshly ejected Steve Reid in for his early bath. This syndrome seems confined to the Reebok Stadium as the incident was again in Bolton. Hard up Loan Kings, Bolton have sent a 200 quid bill to Blackburn for the repairs.

A new strain of the PTS was found at The Arse, when Robert Pires and Terry Henry ganged up on Olaf Melberg in the players' tunnel and threatened him with their eye liner and powder compact after Melberg had broken one of Pires' newly

varnished finger nails in a tackle. Players' Tunnel Syndrome needs to be examined before a players' tunnel is seriously damaged.

Once again the early season fervour is still getting the better of Premier League managers, with a frenzy of loan signings and Chelski breaking the bank again, getting set to lash out another wad before the close of the transfer window. Boro have been getting jiggy in the loan market, Steve McLaren has got the Bolton Bug of loaning players in for the season. Latest loaners are Gazza Mendieta, from cashless Lazio, and Danny Mills from equally cashless Leeds. Mendieta impressed in the midweek 0-0 draw bore against Leichester. There is also talk that Boro are looking to recruit Celts' blonde, Neil Lennon...on loan.

Red Roman Roubles and Chelski blew away the 100 million mark by signing Argie Herman Crispy from Inter Milanians for 16.8 million quid. We expect the signing of Real pay rebel, Claudette Makelele, for around 10 mil, before the transfer window slams shut. The Red Oil Baron has signed a new team since his arrival 8 weeks ago and has made the off-season plenty interesting. 6 points

from 2 games, and Euro Champs League qualification, has been a satisfying start for any Chelski fan. With Derek's big, cheesy grin giving me the sh**s. Let's see how that grin is in the middle of a miserable, muddy, English winter.

Banana TV



Premiership Bizarro

In other transfer bollocks, Celtic are trying to highjack Wolves efforts to sign former Boro Brazilian, Emerson. Rumour is that Celtic are just trying to wind up Wolves and will end any interest. The last time Emerson was in England, he got worse as it got colder and left Boro for Spain before the end of the winter. After leaking 9 goals in 2 games and despite a

battling performance at ManU, Wolves and Sir Jack will be looking for anyone willing to take a caning each week.

Not to be outdone in transfer bollocks, the mighty Tottenham have made some bollocks of their own. Last week Spurs, in all their wisdom had tabled a 7-mil bid for Brazilian Wonder Kid, Diego. However, Diego's current club, Santos, wanted to keep him until the end of their season, in December. Instead of saying OK, Spurs ran out of wisdom, put their rubber cheque back in the wallet and cut off negotiations. Diego's dad has pleaded with Tottenham to wait but they are not interested. Diego doesn't know how close he came to ending a promising career and will no doubt sign for The Barse or a Milanese side and go on to be one of the greatest players the world has ever seen.

First sacking of the year goes to Glen Roederage. Not much of a surprise here, or as former player Julian Dicks said, the only surprise was that it was not done in the summer. Come on Julian, that would have been a real heartless thing to do after a brain op. Roederage didn't do himself any favours though. His last game in charge was marked with the astounding decision to change into kit at the Bed &

Breakfast where they were staying rather than use Rotherham's changing room as he thought they were too small. We think that says it all and wish Glen all the best in his new career.

To end this week we have a story from The Community Shield or as we still like to call it, The Charity Shield. ManU fan, Jamie Mardon saw a great chance to get up close and personal with his ManU heroes. Industrious Jamie spotted a commentator's microphone on a table.

Quick as a flash he grabbed it and made his way onto the pitch and started to interview Giggsy and Ferdinand. However, Jamie's game was tumbled by the United pair as they got suspect about his dodgy interviewing techniques and the fact that the mic wasn't switched on. Police, in an uncharitable mood, arrested Mardon and he is to be charged, facing a 4-month ban from football grounds. Not much community spirit there we think!

There ends another week of Bizarro in the Premiership. Tune your computers into www.bananatv.com for all the latest bollocks!

See you next week!

Nige & Derek
Premiership Bizarro

SOCCErwOMAN BY JANENE MAR

DEPLETED QANTAS MATILDAS COMPETE WELL IN LOSS TO CHINA

The illness-depleted Qantas Matildas put up a solid performance before losing 2-0 against world number four-ranked China on Thursday night in Jinan. Nine of the 19-strong Australian side had been suffering from a gastric infection on the day of the opening match of their Pre-World Cup Tour.

The Qantas Matildas took the game to China, runners-up at the last Women's World Cup of 1999, with the Australians dominating play for good periods of a fast-paced first half and unlucky not to take the lead. China however went in at the break with a one-goal advantage before lifting their play for the second half, but found 15-ranked Australia strong in defence.

"China showed that they are a very well drilled team, and their preparations are well underway," said

National Coach Adrian Santrac after the match. "The result in itself is disappointing, from the point of view that we should have been 2-0 up before China scored their first goal, and that goal was on a breakaway counter-attack."

Santrac added, "Our players gave everything they had - we couldn't ask for anything more. There were some important lessons that we picked up from tonight's game and we'll be stronger for the next game and continue to develop as we move closer to the World Cup."

Suffering the worst from the gastric infection, the trio of co-vice captain and New York Power midfielder Joanne Peters, defender Rhian Davies, and goalkeeper Amy Beattie were ruled out of contention for the match.

Teenage defender Karla Reuter, called into the World Cup team three weeks ago to replace the injured Thea Slatyer, celebrated her senior interna-

tional debut, coming in off the bench in the 78th minute.

Both Australia and China are drawn together in Group D of next month's Women's World Cup, and scheduled to face each other on 25 September in the second of the three group matches.

"Our form today and in September will be very different," said Santrac. "We will, as will China, have some different players, and we expect our form to be very different come the World Cup."

Not overawed by the calibre of their opponent, the Qantas Matildas were soon on the attack, and almost took the lead in the 12th minute. Danielle Small hassling well to win the ball before finding April Mann whose strike curled past the top corner of goal. The following minute, a Heather Garriock cross set up Small, only for the danger to be cleared by the Chinese defence.

Soon after, on the quarter-hour mark, the home team snatched the opening goal with a quick counter-attack, Teng Wei finishing the move with a heat shot. Seven minutes before half-time, a promising Australian attack resulted in a corner kick, a good chance headed over by captain Cheryl Salisbury.

Six minutes after half-time, China doubled their lead with a long switching ball to the left. The resultant shot rebounded off the crossbar, and was headed in by Pan Lina. China continued to test the visitors on the quick break, with the Australians getting back well to cover. The Qantas Matildas' best chance for the half came with five minutes remaining, Garnock's fantastic left foot attempt on the turn from the edge of the box flying just past the top corner of goal after good lead up work from Dianne Alagich.

China almost increased their lead in the dying three minutes, but for a top class save by Australian goalkeeper Cassandra Kell to stop a Chen Jinyu rocket, and then a great chase down by debutante Reuter to prevent a one-on-one chance with the keeper.

The Qantas Matildas travel to Qingdao this afternoon (Sat) in preparation for Sunday night's return match against China. After playing her part in Washington Freedom's WUSA championship win over Atlanta Beat in last Sunday's final, forward Kelly Golebiowski was due to join her Australian teammates late last night.

MATCH DETAILS :

CHINA 2 (Teng Wei, 15m, Pan Lina 52m)

AUSTRALIA 0

Half-time score: 1-0

Date: Thu 28 August 2003 7.45pm kickoff
Venue: Shandong Sport Centre Stadium Jinan
Shandong province

Crowd: 5 000 approx

Conditions: Humid 22°C, Pitch reasonable surface damp underneath

AUSTRALIA: Cassandra Kell (gk), Gill Foster (Amy Wilson 46), Sacha Warwicht, Dianne Alagich, Cheryl Salisbury (c), Bryony Dous (Taryn Rockall 63), April Mann (Hayley Crawford 46), Heather Garnock, Path Grant (Karla Reuter 78), Tal Karp, Danielle Small.

Cautions: nil

Subs not used: Melissa Barbier, Rhian Davies, Joanne Peters, Amy Beattie

CHINA: Li Jie (Xie Hui) 78, Fan Yunjie Zhao Lihong (Chen Jinyu 52), Bi Yan (Zhang Qiang 65), Liu Yah (Yu Weimin 75), Pan Lina, Zhao Yan, Wang Liping, Teng Wei (Meng Jun 68), Han Duan, Qu Feifei (Xie Cunxia 78).

Cautions: nil

Subs not used: Suo Rui, Gao Hongxia, Han Wen Xia.

Qantas Matildas Schedule - Pre-World Cup tour:

Sun 24 August - Travel to China
Thu 28 August - AUSTRALIA v CHINA in Jinan kickoff 7.45pm (9.45pm AEST)
Sun 31 August - AUSTRALIA v CHINA in Qingdao kickoff 7.45pm (9.45pm AEST)
Tue 2 September - Travel to England
Thu 4 September - AUSTRALIA v ENGLAND, in Burnley, kickoff 7.15pm (FRI 4.15am AEST)
Fri 5 September - Travel to Scotland
Sat 6 September - AUSTRALIA v SCOTLAND in Livingston, kickoff 12.00noon (9.00pm AEST)
Sun 7 September - Travel to Canada
Sun 14 September - AUSTRALIA v CANADA in Kingston, kickoff 2.00pm (MON 4.00am AEST)
Mon 15 September - Travel to Los Angeles, ready for first World Cup match on 21 Sept

The FIFA Women's World Cup USA 2003 is scheduled for 20 September to 12 October. The Qantas Matildas open the campaign on Sunday 21 September against Russia in Los Angeles followed by China on Thursday 25 September in Los Angeles, then Ghana on Sunday 28 September in Portland.

The Final Draw for the 2003 Women's World Cup held on 17 July, produced the following groups:

Group A - USA, Sweden, Nigeria, DPR Korea

Group B - Norway, France, Brazil, Korea Republic

Group C - Scotland, Australia, Canada, Chile

Group D - China, Ghana, Australia, New Zealand

THE BLOCK SAYS ...

By Daniel Kuzlow

Italian soccer has reached a new low as news broke that as many as 95 per cent of the Serie B teams due to contest the new 2003/2004 season set to boycott the season because their respective Federation in their infinite wisdom decided to reinstall four sides into the second tier competition.

The decision by 19 of the original 20 sides has come because they had hoped to end a long running court battle between Catania, Genoa and Salernitana - which filed lawsuits after they were relegated to Serie C. Fiorentina, one of Italy's most popular teams until it went bankrupt and was booted to Italy's lowest league, was also promoted.

So now what becomes of those teams who battled through last season to avoid the drop? Their hard work amounts to absolutely nothing if a spoilt group of three can demand to be reinstated through a legal battle. I'm sorry, but Catania, Genoa and Salernitana had some nine months to save them-

selves from the drop, and the decision to reprise them simply to stop themselves from perhaps getting blood on their hands is simply ludicrous.

Is it any wonder that Italian soccer on an International level hasn't tasted success since the 1982 World Cup. On the domestic and the European fronts, calico still remains supreme because the clubs are often run by hard, iron fisted business men, who realise the success of their team depends on the making decisions.

But the decision by Italian National Olympic Committee, which is the country's top sports authority to sanction such a decision I believe is a further nail in the coffin for Italian sport in general and most importantly another blow to soccer, that is struggling to make inroads internationally.

It is only when officials move beyond keeping your own hands clean and bringing in a culture that removes such impudent behaviour that starts at the bottom, and flows through to the soon the very top of the sport will, the nation be ready to once again conquer the world.

Green & Gold Army Series

Green & Gold Army

<http://www.ggarmy.com>

S O C C E R N O O S

Socceroos v Jamaica

It's time for Frank and the boys to put the disappointment of the Dublin loss behind them and stick it to the 'Reggae Boyz' of Jamaica. The following GGArmy events are the only place to be for all the colour and excitement of the Reading match at home. **ENTRANCE IS FREE.**

In Melbourne head to Charles Dickens Tavern
290 Collins Street, Melbourne.

- Free entry
- 'Happy Hour' for GGArmy members between 9 and 11pm
- Free finger food during match
- Meals served until 9pm

THIS Sunday September 7

(2pm Reading, UK)

LIVE @ 11PM AEST

Replay of Socceroos v England @ 8pm

Come along and make it a great night. Start off with the replay of that great night in February followed by the big Jamaican friendly **LIVE.**

For details of our Sydney and other events visit ggarmy.com

The Green and Gold Army – Australia's national soccer supporters group

Register free today by visiting ggarmy.com

OCEANIA OR BUST

By Mark van Aken

Heartbreak has so long been the companion of the Australian soccer fan. Never more polarized than after the last World Cup campaign, but rather the one before it. Australia fights for a 1-1 result in Tehran in front of 125,000 frenzied fans. Some young lad called Kewell had done the impossible and booked half a seat to gay Paris. All that was left was to finish them off on home turf in front of 85,000 plus at the MCG.

Following the script perfectly the fans roll up, take a deafening racket on a balmy evening and the Aussies dominate possession for the entire first half and net 2 goals which could – nay, should have easily been 4 or 5. The game continues on its path until we know the rest.

That we managed only 1-0 at home at the same venue four years later against greater quality opposition and then were soundly beaten 3-1 away helped ease the pain. Not that it didn't hurt mind you, but we could only smell it this time, the aroma of Japan's bushi was only faint while in '97 the team from El Tel Aviv had the crumbs from the croissants falling off the side of their faces.

It's with this in mind that there was a surreal feeling in the air as FIFA granted it's smallest Confederation instant access to Germany 2006. With all due respect to our pacific friends, we weren't just eating the bratwurst, sour kraut and Beck's – we were boking on it. And choke we did.

In the early hours of a Sunday morning not too long ago came the news that proved more than ever the adage "what the lord giveth, the lord taketh away". In this case the role of deity being played by Sepp Blatter and his executive committee. Just like that, the disappointment and the heartbreak of 11 straight World Cup failures was again knocking on the door of Australia's football community.

Some said good riddance. Mark Schwarzer, Australia's own keeper said as much when he labelled the automatic qualification a kin to a hollow victory. There seemed to be a resolve amongst all Australians from Farina to Joe Average on the streets that while automatic qualification was sweet, without actually 'earning' it then we would always be a little sour. This nobility is of course no longer a hypothetical notion as the Socceroos have no choice but to earn their spot at Football's "monde".

After all the kicking and screaming and blaming and shaming what are we left with? We seem to be at football's equivalent of ground zero, shocked and stunned looking for help from all and sundry. Where now we collectively ask? While being far more diplomatic of late, shortly after our spot was so cruelly revoked Socceroo coach Frank Farina was quoted as saying "we should look at ways of providing a

decent qualifying path for ourselves, maybe through Asia. We've got to do something". Farina's views have been echoed by players, media and fans alike.

With little support from FIFA, most members of Oceania or our potential merger partners in Asia, it seems to be a pipe dream. Talk also hints of splitting Asia in two, with an East and West 'Conference' system. Under this model the East consumes Oceania.

One giant hurdle here is of course that Asia has said thanks, but no thanks. It sees that it has enough on its plate minding its own back yard without taking on the baggage of another group of largely dysfunctional and 'non-value adding' nations. By 'value adding' we are speaking in marketing and economic terms, the terms by which the modern game is of course governed. If Australia boasted a population of 200 million rather than 20 million and brought more than around 10 million households and 16 million TV sets to the table then we may be talking about how Asia embraced Oceania with both arms rather than how to sneak up on them from behind to pick their pocket.

Interestingly enough, when Australia did reach the 'Promised Land' back in 1974, we did it through Asia. Both Australia and New Zealand were the sole Oceanic nations to enter the Cup and amalgamated with no less than 13 teams from Asia which were then split into four groups. The rest, as they say, is history.

In those early days nearly half a century ago it seems that Australia and New Zealand's allegiance could have gone either way. Oceania began its life as a Confederation in 1966, having been mooted two

years earlier by top officials from Australia (Jim Bayutti), New Zealand (Syd Guppi) and FIFA. It was born out of the Asian Confederation which itself was only fledgling at the time.

It begs the question; for what reason does the Oceania Football Confederation exist? The motives of the Anzac nations were surely not pluralist in nature, and we may take some creative license in guessing they were not performing soccer good will towards their island neighbours but rather looking for a way forward for their countries on the path to the World Cup. If only they could have foreseen how fortuitous the path for this tiny confederation would become, producing only two finalists in double-digit attempts.

Neither they, nor anybody could have predicted the remarkable development that Asia would enjoy in the coming decades; culturally, economically and in the hemisphere of professional sport, culminating in the highly innovative and successful World Cup in Korea and Japan last year.

After seeing the original window of opportunity slam shut, Australia has unsuccessfully lobbied to take part in Asia ever since those days in the 60's. We can only ponder the different state the game might be in if this had occurred way back then. In the modern climate when the line between football and politics is sometimes more clouded than Mark Bosnich's head after 4 straight days of amphetamine and Play Station, one also ponders what role the Howard government plays in the acceptance of Australia amongst our South East Asian neighbours.

More provocative talk centers on the idea of Australia leaving Oceania and going it alone. A

recent interview with Sepp Blatter revealed there would be nothing to stop us doing this- nothing of course but diplomacy and the lack of a future as a relevant child in the FIFA family. Such action would force FIFA to find an 'alternative' path for the Socceroos to qualify for Germany. Almost certainly this 'alternative' path would be none too complimentary, as any such move would be flying in the face of both FIFA and the footballing world in general. Australia's path to the cup has traditionally been difficult enough without revenge being in the mind of FIFA while working on the fixturing for the green and gold.

While Asia seems unwilling to house Oceania on a full time basis, it has welcomed a strengthening in ties between the two adjacent confederations. An in principle invitation to the 2008 Asia Cup is more than enough to get both the football lovers and bean counters at Soccer Australia licking their lips. It is as yet undecided what path the OFC champion would take towards Asia 2008. A careful look at the qualification groups for next years Asia Cup doesn't exactly make brilliant reading.

Group A for example is typical of all the qualification groups (FIFA rankings in brackets) and includes Thailand (64), Uzbekistan (112), Hong Kong (136) and Tajikstan (180). With all due respect, these are hardly games that are likely to sell out Suncorp Stadium or Subiaco any time soon. Other theories centre on us entering the Asia Cup directly after the qualification rounds, where the more tasty encounters against the Japans and South Koreas will come. This is certain to raise at least a few eyebrows amongst the proletariat in the AFC who may well question why non-Asian teams are taking spots at their own tournament without actually qualifying through Asia first.

Recently Oceania's junior champions have been invited to take part in Asian competitions that will in time reap great rewards. Considering our under prepared Joeys have bowed out in straight sets in Finland last week, these rewards can't come soon enough.

Clearly Australia needs to be a leader in the OFC and the AFC, Sepp Blatter has said as much. We have recently provided refereeing infrastructure to Asia, a continent that has a staggering 60% of the world's football referees. We are a small but developed nation and as such we must work through our own internal problems and lead the game in the region.

Australia is a global leader in sports infrastructure and in this regard we have so much to offer our cousins and neighbours in the South Pacific and beyond. More than ever it seems that the Socceroos destiny lies where it always has. For Farina and his men it is simply Oceania or bust.

Symes back on board

Wollongong Wolves have welcomed back chairman Doug Symes after he was cleared from medics to take on the job again.

He was voted in unanimously last Wednesday by the Wolves board after over two years out of the job. Symes saw the Wolves take two premierships as chairman before he was voted off the

board in 2001.

Symes told the Illawarra Mercury that he was very happy to be back on board and is looking forward to the new season.

"With Frank Lowy in charge of Soccer Australia now and the restructuring of the NSL taking place, the next six to twelve months represent a crucial period for the development of the game," Symes said.



Doug Symes has regained his position as chairman of the Wollongong Wolves.

WAITing For Big Things At The Knights

The Melbourne Knights last week complete a major signing for the club after announcing Frankston Pines' striker Nick Waite as their new target man for this season.

Waite started training with Ian Dobson's side last week after completing a wonderful season with newly promoted Victorian side Frankston Pines whereby the side reaches as far as the VPL final where they lost out to Dobson's Green Gully one-nil.

Many observers of Waite's game have regarded him as one of the best prospects in the game this season, one being former Socceroo Eddie Krnecic who has labelled the ex-Pines star as a player capable of going to Europe and making it big. One of the very few FIFA Agents in Australia, Krnecic believes that the Knights are a good stepping stone for his career and that with his attributes, he would surely fit in somewhere in Europe.

The former Marconi coach wasted no time in signing Waite as one of his players for his stable as he expects to send a couple of fresh faces over in the not too distant future.

The 21-year-old has had a bit of a struggle in attending the Knights training as living in Victoria's Mornington is far way from the city of Melbourne but did not let that dampen his spirits in playing in the National League this year.

It is believed that Waite has been given the number 14 jersey in a squad of 22 ending speculation that they weren't interested in the striker.

Bagging a massive 20 goals in the Pines first year in the Victorian State League then a



Frankston Pines' Nick Waite will be one to watch out for in the National League this season with the Knights.

further 12 in the first campaign in the Premier League, goalscoring is one of the main aspects he possess and hopes that this trend will continue right through till the end of the NSL season.

It looks as though Waite will partner Solomon Islands international Henry Fa'Arodo up front entering a lethal combination of a target man and a small, silky striker, like the partnership English Premier League giants Sunderland once shared with big man Niall Quinn and 'wee man' Kevin Phillips.

To date the Knights have secured the services of The Knights squad includes recruits Stan Zilic from Adelaide Raiders, Peter Buljan (South Melbourne), Tom Razov (St Albans), Andy Vargas (Green Gully) and Steve Pantelidis (Altona East).

OLYMPIC-HAWKS PLAY OUT DRAW

A cool Wednesday evening saw Sydney Olympic play out a quiet 0-0 draw against Super League outfit Stanmore Hawks.

The match never lived up to great heights, with a number of trialists blending in with the established senior players.

Golmouth action was limited in the cool weather as both sides found it difficult to exert themselves.

A number of opportunities that fell to Pablo Cardozo, Jim Bakis and Paul Kohler were well saved by the Hawks' keeper, whilst at the other end, Clint Bolton (1st half) and Glen Moss (2nd half) had it easy.

In a rotating defensive line Baillie, Souris and Karlovic held the fort along with defensive yet roaming midfielder Paul Kohler. On the flanks John Kiriazopoulos, Predrag Bojic and Simon Catanzaro provided good service, whilst upfront Pablo Cardozo and Jim Bakis are acquiring some nice touches as they prepare to become a formidable attacking combination.

Solid second half performances were had by Denis Alilovic along with some promising play by Cardozo Jnr, Richie. A few injury concerns left some players sidelined, but it's given a host of former Sydney Olympic youth players and top-rank State League players the opportunity to impress Coach Paps.



Pablo Cardozo starred for Olympic.

VICTORIAN CHRONICLES by Brendon Davis

NSL DISGRACE

Emotions frequently run hot in the NSL – rarely do they become as extreme as they have become over recent weeks involving the NSL's treatment of South Melbourne.

For the second successive season South have been drawn away from home in round one, then have the bye in round two – which severely hampers membership sales. South is one of the few NSL clubs boasting a significant membership base which in turn generates significant revenue for the club.

South made many representations to the NSL seeking equity – South received various undertakings, but ultimately South's reasonable requests were ignored by the authorities.

Infact they cited the "fact" that various Sydney stadiums were unavailable due to rugby as the reason for South being forced to play away early in the season – yet South's first round is in Sydney, against Parramatta – so rugby fixtures have nothing to do with this.

The NSL authorities have long been criticised for being so Sydney centric, this treatment of South Melbourne only serves to fuel that fire.

FURY OVER ADELAIDE

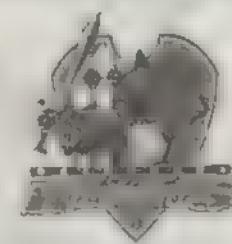
If Adelaide do withdraw from the NSL the Victorian Clubs will likely support litigation against the Adelaide Club and its directors.

Neither club wants to lose a home game,

sponsorship and membership packages sold incorporate a 13 game package so a withdrawal at this point would hurt our clubs.

No doubt the solicitors will speedily cite the Forces Media Statement of 24th June where the Adelaide Club acknowledged its participation and pledged to participate for the season in the NSL.

SOUTH PAINT BALL



Last weekend Souths pre-season incorporated a paint ball trip.

It was a wonderful team bonding experience with players and coaches having a great opportunity shooting and maiming one another, in the neatest possible way of course.

This week South leave to South Australia where a comprehensive weeks training and matches are scheduled in the lead up to the final friendly, against the Knights before the season opener against the Power in Sydney.

SHIRT PRESENTATION NIGHTS

The Melbourne Knights will be held on Saturday, 13 September 2003 at 7:00pm at the Croatian Catholic Centre, Cnr Fitzgerald Road and Whiteside Avenue, Ardeer.

For bookings you can phone the club on 9312 3584.

South Melbourne hold their shirt presentation the night prior, on Friday 12th September at Tudor Court, Kooyong Road,

North Caulfield. Call Mirella on 9645 9797 for bookings.

Both nights include an auction of player sponsorships – it's always a great night and well worth attending so support your club by buying a ticket for this important night.

NO SMOKING

Quit is continuing and expanding its sponsorship with South Melbourne for the 03/04 season.

In announcing this sponsorship, South Melbourne has assured Quit that Bob Jane Stadium will be completely smokefree. Smoking restrictions within the stadium will be enforced however provisions will be made for smokers to leave the stadium and smoke outside.



Quit is providing South with valuable sponsorship dollars and South Melbourne is looking forward to a long and successful partnership with VicHealth.

NEW MAJOR SPONSOR AT SOUTH

On Tuesday 10th September South will announce a new major sponsor.

Laiki Bank will continue as a key sponsor, which will include their naming on the back of the shirt.



In the name of charity

The Marconi Stallions two weeks ago helped raise over \$1200 for Cystic Fibrosis after their 'Meet The Fans' day.

A carnival type atmosphere, generated by celebrities such as Neil Evans and Kyle Patterson, along with former Marconi greats such as Zlatko Nastevski and David Lowe provided plenty of entertainment.

A select celebrity 11, took

on a Marconi Old Boys outfit that took us back to the halcyon days at Bossley Park.

Boasting an all-star front line of Jerry Gomez,

Zlatko Nastevski and David Lowe, the Old Boys showed that although they may be a little heavier and a touch slower, they've lost none of their skill.

Jimmy Fraser, between the sticks for the celebrity team, showed his class. The former Socceroo was brilliant in stopping some point blank shots.

The Stallions coaching and fitness staff also got a run, with JP, Andy Harper and conditioner Anthony Crea all dusting off their boots. Under 10s coach and former youth international Darren Iocca also showcased his ability.

The Old Boys match, was followed by the Stallions tak-

shot-out the visitors were faultless, and gave Michael Turnbull in goals no chance, with five perfectly taken kicks. Chad Gibson was the unlucky Stallion who missed, the usually reliable defender setting himself up for some innocent ribbing amongst teammates.

Source — Marconi FC Website.

ing on the NSW Blues. The domesite one-day cricket champs were without some of their stars, but still put on an impressive display.

Michael Slater, shone up front for the cricketers and had a real go at the Stallions defence. Nathan Bracken, Don Nash and Doug Bollinger were others who also impressed with their ability with the round ball.

In a dramatic penalty

Some of the celebrities shown in the photo above at Marconi Stadium.

shoot-out the visitors were faultless, and gave Michael Turnbull in goals no chance, with five perfectly taken kicks. Chad Gibson was the unlucky Stallion who missed, the usually reliable defender setting himself up for some innocent ribbing amongst teammates.

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The Old Boys match, was followed by the Stallions tak-

Branko Culina settles into new role

By Joe Russo

Former Sydney United, Sydney Olympic and Canberra Cosmos coach Branko Culina has settled into his new role as Technical Director of Soccer NSW.

It is rather new role encompassing the former Development Officer's role. It involves overseeing soccer development in NSW from a technical point of view.

According to Soccer NSW's website Soccer NSW President, Tom Doumani said the following about the appointment: "Branko Culina is the highest profile and most experienced coach that has taken this important position at Soccer NSW and we look forward to the benefit of his expertise and experience to further the objectives of Soccer NSW from the grass roots to the elite senior ranks."

The 1997 NSL Coach of the Year has only just returned from Europe a few days ago but has quickly resumed duties at Soccer NSW.

Summer in Europe for Culina is an annual event. His trips are part holiday, part family (his son Jason has recently returned to Ajax Amsterdam and is under the tutelage of the great Marco van Basten) and part soccer development, where Culina can enhance his coaching skills by keeping up to date with the latest European methods.

"Going overseas keeps me in touch with the latest trends. It is a refresher, an upgrade of your skills if you like," Culina said.

"You continually improve yourself and the people around you. It is very important to be up to date. You need to go and see not only games but also training methods, set ups etc."

For the former NSL coach it is a new challenge albeit a different one. Regular club football has been replaced with the code's development in NSW.

"One of our prime targets is to produce coaches and athletes for bigger and better things. Hopefully we will produce better coaches who in turn pass that on to our young talent."

"It is harder than ever to break into the overseas market and we have to prepare potential players better than ever before."

Australia continues to produce some of the most outstanding young players but the lure of the European professional leagues often proves too great.

In the current market, where the exorbitant payments are just a memory, it is perhaps better for a younger player to remain in Australia for a longer period and develop his skills here.

"We should keep youngsters here until they are ready both technically and mentally.

The mental side of things is often the hardest thing to deal with, such as a new culture, foreign language, and living away from family and friends.

Is there an ideal age for young players to make the transition from the NSL to the European leagues?

"The ideal age depends on the individual but a couple of years in the NSL would be good. Ideally, they should have played for Australia at Under 17 and Under 20 levels as well."

"You need to go through a few stages but perhaps 21 or 22 would be an ideal age. In the current market in Europe, having had first hand experience with young players including my son [Jason] going over there, I would say 18 or 19 is just a bit too early now," Culina concluded.

7

13

STRIKERS STRENGTHEN SQUAD

Two rather large pieces of the jigsaw otherwise known as Stuart McLaren's Brisbane Strikers squad for the 2003/04 NSL season have fallen into place, with the news that two key players from last season's squad have agreed to re-sign with the club.

McLaren told the BSSA that goalkeeper Jason Kearton and midfielder Peter Grierson had both agreed to terms, ending weeks of speculation amongst supporters.

McLaren was relieved to have finally obtained Kearton's commitment to another season. "Obviously, it (goalkeeper) is a key position and it's nice to get that bedded down" he said, adding that Kearton would probably sign on the dotted line today while Grierson would do so "soon".

The retention of Kearton



QLD Lions stars Greg Di Losa and Warren Moon were offered contracts at the Brisbane Strikers.

and Grierson should be a welcome boost for Strikers supporters, not only because of their quality but also because, in a squad that is shaping as a very youthful one, their experience and steady influence could become crucial to holding the side's composure and confidence together when under pressure. It comes as a bonus that Grierson - affectionately known to supporters as "Super Pete", is in form and has been scoring goals for fun in the Queensland Premier League for the Palm Beach Sharks during the NSL off-season.

But while McLaren has secured two of his most experienced players, the race to become Kearton's goalkeeping understudy is well and truly hotting up.

McLaren said he was still trialling Scott Higgins, who played in the pre-season fixture against Peninsula Power last week, but was also offering trials to 25-year-old North Star keeper Anthony Hall and to 22-year-old Steve Tilovski from Victoria's Fawkner Blues. The Blues were coached until recently by McLaren's assistant coach, Luciano Trani.

The goalkeeper trialists were not the only surprises McLaren had in store for supporters today. It appears that peace, or at least a cease-

fire, has broken out between the Brisbane Strikers and the Queensland Lions, because McLaren gave us the heartening news that Lions players Warren Moon and Greg Di Losa have been given clearances by their club to begin training with the Strikers last week.

Di Losa now has an opportunity to resume a brief flirtation with NSL football. The pacy and aggressive forward made a handful of appearances for the Strikers in 1999/2000 before leaving to pursue his teaching career

Finally, we can report that two other trialists who turned out against Peninsula Power last week - Anthony Paolino and Wade Russell - have been invited to continue training with the squad. Although McLaren said the 19-year-old midfielders would not be offered contracts at this stage due to the fact that he has an abundance of talented midfielders already, they had done enough to convince him that they would benefit from further exposure to training with the Strikers.

South Melbourne angry over NSL draw

By Will Thom

The new look Australian Premier League suffered a major setback last week after South Melbourne directors have complained about fixture scheduling for the upcoming season.

South have demanded a review of the schedule after they were handed three consecutive away fixtures to begin their season.

They were further outraged learning that their round four opponents will be the Brisbane Strikers, known for their small fanbase and if that isn't enough, their cross-town rivals, Melbourne Knights will play the Wollongong Wolves in Melbourne on the same day. This means, that when round four arrives, the Knights will have played three home fixtures compared to South's one.

South will travel to Parramatta Stadium to face the Power on the opening day, rest with a bye the following week and visit Wollongong in round three.



South Melbourne CEO Mark Patterson claims that his request for amendments to the original draw were completely ignored by Soccer Australia even after he made agreements with

other clubs. "We have made representations, but it doesn't look as if they will be changed. It does not provide us with any real opportunity to market our memberships in the first few weeks of the season", Patterson told the Herald Sun last week.

Patterson has stated that early results are so crucial with supporters' interest.

It seems that Soccer Australia is doing South Melbourne no favours as one of the most anticipated of their home games this season, against Sydney Olympic, has been scheduled in a mid-week time slot.

With the strong possibility that South Melbourne's pleas will be ignored by Soccer Australia, it seems that they will have to make do with what they have and hope of some good early results starting with Parramatta Power at Parramatta Stadium on September 19th.

Kewell struggling to find role

Socceroo Harry Kewell is struggling to make an impact at Anfield, and Liverpool are languishing at the foot of the table after the start of the English Premier League.

His play was so ineffectual for the rest of the match (Aston Villa) that one sports writer described him as "wretched, slow, sluggish and looking 'disinterested in a way only Harry Kewell can ... doggedly nonchalant'".

His lack of spark came as no surprise to Leeds fans, who watched Kewell's form drop away last season as the club battled with a massive £80 million (\$194m) debt, three changes of managers, a change of chairman and an exodus of top players.

But at Liverpool, the mercurial Aussie was expected to show the talent that led to a bidding war between top clubs for his services.

Kewell, who claims to be "three times more effective when not on the left wing", chose Liverpool ahead of Manchester United, Chelsea, Barcelona and Arsenal primarily because of where manager Gerard Houllier said he would play him. At the time, Houllier hinted he would play him through the middle.

"You have to feel some sympathy," said Daily Telegraph sports writer Alan Smith.

"Kewell has come into a team short of attacking direction. There is no real pattern to Liverpool's forward moves, no real idea of where the ball will go."

Smith suggests using Kewell as a second striker, a little back from Michael Owen.



Harry Kewell is struggling to find form with Liverpool but will hope for his fortunes to change in the next few weeks.

"This way Kewell can have his precious free role, he can wander around instinctively, without compromising the shape and strength of the midfield behind," he said.

"Kewell's rare talent, not to mention

his ego, demands something more centrally based so that he can express himself properly."

Kewell has found also sympathy from high-profile former Liverpool players John Barnes and Stan Collymore.

Collymore broke the transfer record when he moved from Nottingham Forest to Anfield in 1995, only to find himself playing out of position under then-manager Roy Evans.

Collymore said it would be a shame if Kewell goes the same way.

"Looking at it purely as a fan, I don't want to see any players with a talent not being harnessed in the right way," said Collymore.

"Surely you buy players and ask them to do what they made their name doing, otherwise why spend £5m on them?"

If Houllier is not going to play Kewell in the position he played for Leeds, he should be prepared to experiment and maybe play him in a free role behind the front two, he said.

Barnes agreed.

"Liverpool need to find a position for Harry and keep him there. I think he could be very effective behind the front two and he has the ability to offer options out wide from that area," said Barnes.

"Harry Kewell is a very good signing but he should not be seen as the man who will deliver the title."

Clarkson To Coach Royals

By Will Thom

The Victorian Premier League is set to welcome former South Melbourne star David Clarkson.

The back-to-back championship winner with South has agreed to a player-coaching role at VPL side Essendon Royals.

Clarkson spoke to the Herald Sun last week and is aware of the pressure associated with the job. "There's pressure to produce, but it's also exciting" he said.

To begin with, Clarkson faces the difficult task of developing the Royals into genuine finals contenders but the club is eminent that they have the right man to do it. Clarkson is certainly not the first player to enter the coaching world this way, with current National Youth coach Ange Postecoglou also starting in the less publicised leagues.

Meanwhile, newly named Victorian Premier League champions Green Gully Cavaliers have been quick to deny rumours that former national league star John Markovski was approached about taking over from Ian Dobson as the new coach. Gully

president Charlie Farrugia said that the club is not concerned about the job at the moment and championship celebrations are taking precedence.



David Clarkson: Former South Melbourne star will coach the Essendon Royals this season.

Strikers to make their mark in NYL

By Will Thom

The National Youth League will be increased by one more team in the upcoming 2003/04 season as the Brisbane Strikers will take part.

They will join the QAS as the only two Queensland teams in the Under 20 competition. The competition is perceived as the reserve grade to national league and is considered a big stepping stone into the senior team.

The selection for players will be open to any player in Queensland wishing to trial and will take place on the 30th August at Heath Park. This carries on Australia's tradition of strong youth emphasis in the sport of soccer. Luciano Trani is the Striker's current senior team assistant coach and will be watching the youngsters with a close eye.

Trani said it is not yet certain who will coach the side, however the field is down to two and a decision is should be made very shortly.

Despite the benefits to youth soccer in Queensland this decision has made, it has raised the concern of a rivalry between the Strikers and the QAS. The QAS has been established as Queensland's premier youth development program for many years and now faces competition in the Strikers. Whether or not the QAS is favourable to young players in comparison to a National League club is an issue and could begin an unfortunate demise of the Institute program.

South of the border in New South Wales, the Institute Of Sport has quit the National Youth League due to the competition these clubs produce and has ended up without any competitive soccer.

However, it may well be evident of the benefits of both these programs in Queensland this year as they both work to produce bright young talents.

Keep an eye out for a batch of young, fresh faces in Brisbane's ranks this year as the Strikers look towards an improvement on a disappointing last season.

SPIRIT EXCEL IN QLD



New Spirit recruit Wayne O'Sullivan has impressed coach Lawrie McKenna in his first few matches.

Northern Spirit returned to Sydney last week after completing their two match tour of North Queensland undefeated.

As part of Spirit's preparations for the 2003-2004 NSL Season the team recorded a 3-1 win in Mackay backed up by a solid 4-1 win in Townsville.

Spirit Coach Lawrie McKenna was pleased with the tour and his team's efforts.

"The tour has been great for both Spirit and the teams we've played up here in North Queensland. I was impressed with Spirit's determination and intensity in both matches. Overall it was a good workout for us and we haven't had any injuries so that's very positive. We've settled quickly as a team on the park and we're all looking forward to our upcoming

tour to China and the kick off of the NSL season."

In the side's first match the Spirit defeated the Red Devils, a Mackay select team, 3-1 in an intense and hard fought match. Northern Spirit's three goals came from striker Stewart Petrie, midfielder John Hutchinson and defender Julian Watts scored from a corner. Spirit's new signing Wayne O'Sullivan was announced as man of the match for his efforts in midfield during the game.

President of the Mackay Soccer Federation and coach of the Red Devils select side, Danny Beerhalter, hopes that Spirit will make the tour part of their regular schedule.

"Northern Spirit were very well accepted up here and we hope they will come back again. Friday night's match was very intense and we took

"We were very keen to host Northern Spirit for this tour and it proved to be a fan-

tastic game that displayed high levels of intensity from both teams. In North Queensland we have the weather, facilities and ability to be a fantastic playing and training venue for all NSL teams. This tour provided benefits to Northern Spirit and gave local players the opportunity to show their talents. With Soccer Australia's restructure of the NSL we see no reason why North Queensland couldn't field a top quality team in the national competition."

The Spirit have organized two trial matches against a Chinese Club team Shenzhen Jianlibao before jetting off to China for a pre-season tour.

Spirit's scheduled pre-season matches are subject to change but are as follows.



Adelaide City Force President Bob D'Ottavi has decided to pull the pin on keeping his side in the NSL this season.

Adelaide City shocked the Australian football community last night, announcing they would not field a team for the coming NSL season, according to a report in the *Adelaide Advertiser* last week.

Force pull out of the NSL

Force president Bob D'Ottavi said an A\$53,000 levy demanded by Soccer Australia was the final straw for City's budget and only if "major financial support" was forthcoming at last Sunday's annual general meeting.

"I said today 'enough is enough'. I can't afford to put in A\$1,500,000 next season - that's what it needs," D'Ottavi said after an emergency board meeting yesterday.

He stressed the club was not folding, that it would continue to operate from its

Ram Park headquarters and with newly-signed coach Zoran Matic and a full list of players lining up in the local Premier League.

D'Ottavi said Adelaide was one of five NSL clubs refusing to pay the latest levy. He did not name the other clubs.

"What's it going to be in another two months time? Another A\$53,000? We're acting responsibly."

"We are not saying we're closing the door and going broke but at this stage we've got to take a deep breath and start again."

Joeys pair impress

By Will Thorne

It may have been a major disappointment for the Australian Under 17 Joeys in their recent World Cup campaign, but things are certainly looking up for Victorian duo Kristian Sarkies and Adrian Leijer.

The Joeys failed to gain any points in the group stage of the tournament in Finland but South Melbourne boss Stuart Munro was pleased with what he saw from the two youngsters and has made it clear he will push for their signatures.

Sarkies had a disappointing tournament himself, plagued by injury, limiting his involvement however Munro was already aware of his potential prior to the tournament.

"I've been speaking to



Stuart Munro: South Melbourne coach is keen to capture two youthful signings in Sarkies and Leijer for his new squad this season.

Kristian for some time. He's had several offers but I think his dad is quite keen for him to come to us", Munro told *'The Herald'*.

Unlike his colleague,

Leijer played all three games for Australia as a defender without any injury worries. "With Leijer, I quite like him, but I haven't spoken to him yet. We'd like to have a

look at him and get him to come train with us" said Munro.

As far as Munro is concerned, South's preparation has gone to plan with the new National League season only weeks away. Former Carlton and Morwell Falcons player Marcus Stergiopoulos has signed a deal with South after stints abroad in Britain and he will slot into Munro's new 4-3-3 formation as a left back.

Goalkeeper Dean Anastasiadis broke his small left toe and faces six weeks on the sideline, that being the only glitch in South Melbourne's preparation.

Eugene Galekovic has been named as his replacement for the start of the season as South attempt to return in the new National League season as genuine title contenders.

Moore the Next Gers Skipper?

By Richard Kreider

Glasgow giants, Rangers is on the brink of losing their influential captain Barry Ferguson, who has expressed a desire to play English Premier League football and Blackburn Rovers are believed to be first in the queue for his signature.

Aston Villa, Everton, Liverpool and Manchester City are also thought to be interested in the skilful midfielder.

Should Ferguson quit the club to which he signed a \$17million, five-year contract, complete with an escape clause, last April, Australian International Craig Moore should be a strong candidate for the skipper's armband.

The 27-year old Canterbury-born defender is considered one of the clubs most experienced campaigners since signing with the Glasgow giants in 1997.

He missed last week's Socceroos friendly against the Republic of Ireland because of a hamstring strain.

Alex McLeish, the Rangers manager, owner David Murray, chairman John McClelland and director of football business Martin Bain all met with Ferguson over the weekend in what looks to have been an unsuccessful bid to keep the 25-year old at the defending Scottish Premier League champion club.



Craig Moore is gunning for that elusive captain's armband at Glasgow.

MATILDA CELEBRATES SWEET VICTORY

Qantas Matildas and Washington Freedom attacker Kelly Golebiowski is celebrating victory as a member of the Washington Freedom side, which defeated Atlanta Beat 2-1 in extra-time of the WUSA final played in San Diego.

Golebiowski was a starting eleven choice for the title match, played before a crowd of 7,106 at Torero Stadium, before being replaced in the second half. It is the 22-year-old Sydneysider's first season in the world's premier women's professional league, and Golebiowski has played a part in all nineteen matches for which she was not been away on Australian Team duty.

Golebiowski becomes the second Australian to play in a WUSA final, and the third Australian player to be part of a WUSA championship-winning squad. Julie Murray helped the San Jose CyberRays to the inaugural WUSA title of 2001 with an MVP winning performance, whilst fellow Aussie Dianne Alagich was forced to watch her CyberRays teammates from the sidelines following a knee reconstruction.

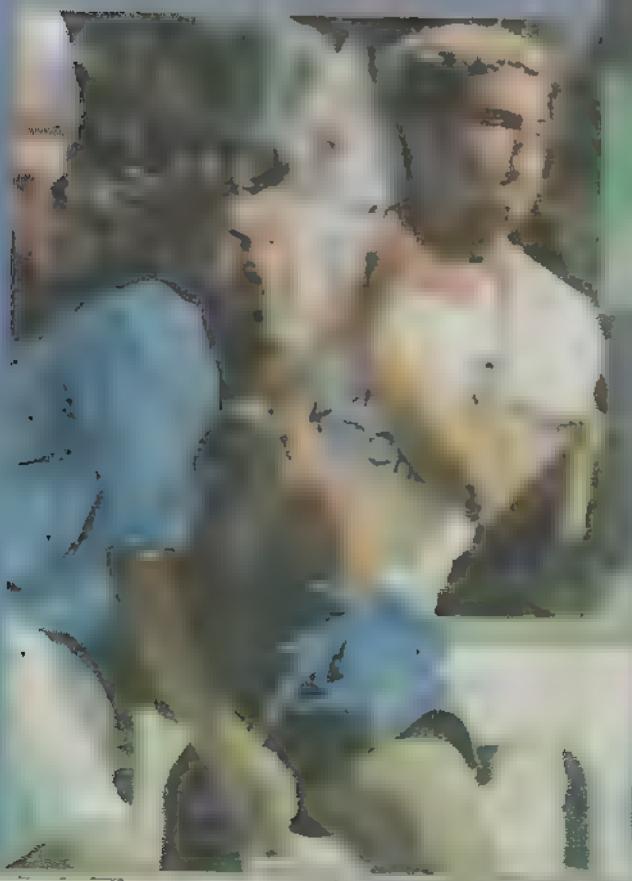
Washington Freedom emerged the victors in today's exciting and dramatic finale to the WUSA's third season.



Kelly Golebiowski: Flying the flag for the Aussies in the WUSA.

Golebiowski had little time to soak up the celebrations, as she joined her Qantas Matildas teammates in China later last week for the national team's final preparations enroute to the FIFA Women's World Cup USA 2003

Four Week Sup Action a



Superleague Finals And Drama

29/2



dressing sheds



by Mark Stavroulakis

NEW SOCCER RADIO SHOW SET FOR DEBUT

Sydney soccer fans are in for a real treat on Sunday nights with the launch of a brand new soccer program on Sydney FM radio.

Sunday Night Soccer will go to air on 98.5 FM at 10.00pm starting this Sunday night with the most comprehensive and entertaining coverage of local and international football.

Hosting the show will be ABSW columnist Joe Russo, along with ABSW Editor Mark Stavroulakis and 98.5 FM correspondent Joseph Carlucci.

Regular guests from the NSL will be a feature of the show which is aimed at the soccer enthusiast.

According to Joseph Carlucci, the show's producer, there will be a host of local players and other soccer personalities featured on a weekly basis.

"Our aim is to provide the listener with the latest soccer news in the most entertaining and informative manner. "Our station can be heard all over Sydney, as far south as Wollongong, as far west as the Blue Mountains and right up to the Central Coast.

"The show will feature the NSL

from continuing However, I can't wait to return to radio," he said. *(Source: 98.5 FM Publicity)*

LOWY TO BRING BACK AUSSIE OVERSEAS STARS

New Soccer Australia chairman Frank Lowy has made an oath that he intends to bring back ex-Australian Socceroo stars currently playing their trades in Europe's domestic leagues.

This comes as a plan to help structure the National League and to offer more excitement in wanting to watch the game at home.

"Bringing back some Australian stars playing overseas is something I wish to do", were the words Lowy stated to AAP last week.

The news came after the Westfield's owner stated that the soccer code is on the verge of receiving more funding from the Australian Sports Commission.

Here's something worth thinking about - imagine the likes of Viduka, Kewell, Okon, Popovic, Muscat, Bresciano, Kalac, Grella, Skoko, Lazaridis and more pull official kits on for their respective National League clubs - a league certainly worth watching that's for sure.

SYDNEY UNITED ON THE PROWL

A number of friendly matches have taken place in order for the start of this year's National League season.

One result that surely shocked a number of punters was Sydney United's three-one shock victory over the highly fancied Parramatta Power last week.

Two goals from former Sydney Olympic youth star Tolgay Ozbey

and a goal from Anthony Zmire was enough to cancel out Power's first goal from new recruit Fernando Rech.

Played in front of a good 600 hundred plus crowd at Macarthur Rams' Lynwood Park, both teams put on a great show for the brave supporters who turned up.

Apart from the four goals, a red card was also seen and that was given to Power live-wire winger Ahmad Elrich.

Sydney United last week also received some good news that youngster Anthony Doumanis has returned back from his trials in Italy and has decided against signing for a third division outfit.

His silky skills will surely be a plus for coach Grant Lee's squad this year.

United will have the pleasure of having four youngsters with enormous talent and skill at the club.

Apart from Doumanis, former Olympic youth stars Labinot Haliti and Tolgay Ozbey and ex-Wolves midfielder George Nohra all possess one main aspect about their games - they have a tremendous amount of skill - the samba party begins at Edensor Park!

National League Round 1 Fixtures

Late last week Soccer Australia FINALLY announced this season's official National League draw.

Amidst the speculation that the Force were not to be included in this year's NSL came the news that they were

scheduled to play Sydney Olympic in the first fixture of the season.

A full list of the National League fixtures will be seen in next week's ABSW - a special colour double page spread to put up on your wall!



Anthony Doumanis: Has returned to Sydney United boosting the side's midfield this season.

Date	Team	vs	Team
19/9/03	Wollongong Wolves	vs	Sydney United
20/9/03	Parramatta Power	vs	South Melbourne
21/9/03	Football Kingz	vs	Newcastle United
21/9/03	Sydney Olympic	vs	Adelaide City Force
21/9/03	Northern Spirit	vs	Brisbane Strikers
21/9/03	Melbourne Knights	vs	Marconi Stallions
		vs	Perth Glory
			Bye



Joe Russo: Set to host his own Radio Show for all National League lovers.

in depth, along with an extensive international flavour," he said.

For Mark Stavroulakis it will be another soccer commitment but this self-confessed soccer tragic takes it all in his stride.

"I am flat out with work as Editor of ABSW, especially on Sundays," he quipped.

"Having said that though, this is also another challenge and I am looking forward to interacting with our listeners and bringing them a quality radio program."

The show's anchor, Joe Russo, is no stranger to radio and looks forward to returning to 98.5 FM.

"I have been associated with this station since 1994 and in 1998 I insisted we get the 10.00pm timeslot on a Sunday night for soccer."

"Along with my old friend Stuart Jones, with whom I had hosted another soccer program in the mid 90's on another Sydney station with Rale Rasic and Micky Brock, we started the Sunday night idea on 98.5 FM.

"Unfortunately at the time, 2000 after a few months, other commitments prevented Stuart and I

A number of rumours have surfaced amongst many pitches across Sydney that Clint Bolton has signed a deal with Parramatta Power this year.

For the past couple of weeks, Bolton has trained and played with Sydney Olympic but no official word has come out of the Power camp that the talented keeper has signed on with Nick T's squad.

Parramatta were rumoured in searching for a keeper after new signing Daniel Beltrame injured himself at a training mishap a couple of weeks ago.

At this stage readers, Bolton is still with the Blues!

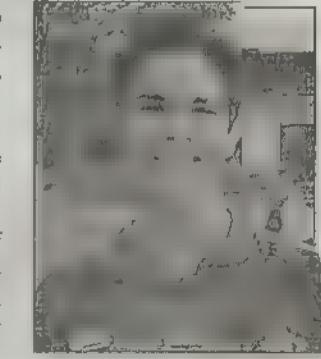
CARDOZO JUNIOR SIGNS WITH OLYMPIC

First former Olympic hero Pablo Cardozo made the trek back to his old club by signing for Sydney Olympic until January a few weeks back. The news this week that younger brother Richie has also signed on with the club, the exciting 16-year-old striker as just come back from international duties with the Australia U17 Joeys stated his delight in signing with the club.

"I've signed a year deal with Olympic and hope to get as much first grade game time as possible with my new side."

Richie was an ex-Olympic player but made a move to the Power with brother Pablo last season.

In a moment the others will never forget, you, Richie



Richie Cardozo: Signed and sealed alongside brother Pablo at Olympic this year.

MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY

South Melbourne last week laid down their law in announcing that all their home fixtures at Bob Jane Stadium are to be played on Sunday evenings at 7.30pm.

Due to a number of fans arguing that a traditional 6pm kick-off was too early, this new strategy comes in tact by the South board hoping to lure more crowds through the turnstiles.

Neighbours the Melbourne Knights have opted for the 3pm kick-off but will go to a 6pm kick-off when daylight saving commences.

CARLE OUT!

Marconi Stallions new recruit Nicky Carle last week received bad news that he will be out for up to 4 weeks with a suspected broken rib suffered during the side's tour in Queensland last week.

The talented left-midfielder was finding top form for JP's new side but bad luck hit the Fairfield based star after hearing the grim news.

After suffering a couple of injuries during his time in the French First Division with Troyes, injuries is the last thing Carle wants to think about as the talented star hopes to spend a good season here hoping to crack into the U23 squad for the Olympic Games in Athens next year.

WHERE'S BOLT?



Nick Carle: Marconi star will be out for a few weeks after injuring his rib in Queensland with the Stallions.

replaced Pablo in Olympic's friendly match against the Stanmore Hawks last week. The dream for the pair is to one-day play alongside each other, something that could well happen this season.

GLORY VICTORIOUS

Perth Glory last Friday evening completed a great result in defeating the Singapore National side three-two in front of a good Perth crowd. Two goals to in-form striker Adrian Caceres and a goal to new Glory star Tommy Pondejek was enough to see off a late surge by their opponents. Keep a lookout for Caceres who has certainly blossomed in this year's pre-season training!

photo of the week



Meet Chelsea's Zillionaire - Money bags Reebok Ambrovich who completed two further signings, no big ones, last Hernan Crespo and Claude Makelele last week.

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FINALS

FRASER HOLD OFF SHARK FIGHTBACK

 **Fraser Park Dragons**

 **Sutherland Sharks**

by Greg Stock

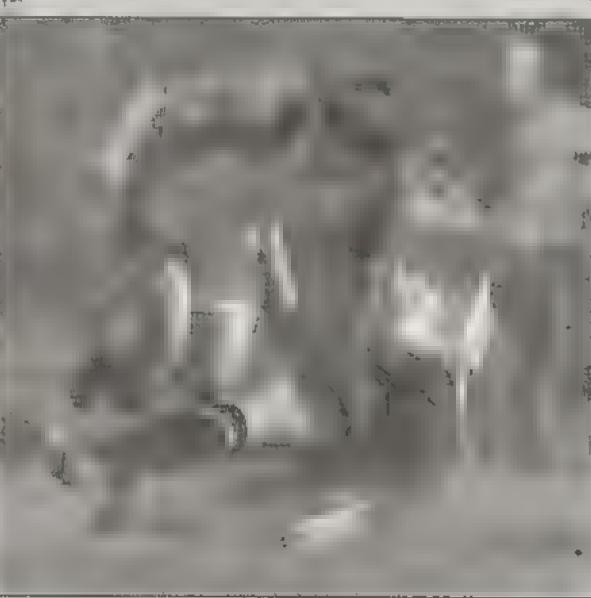
Fraser Park moved to within one game of a coveted Grand Final berth, disposing of an unlucky Sutherland 1-0 in the Winter Super League Preliminary Final.

A 15th minute penalty from star Dragons midfielder Antonio Faria proved enough for the home side to hold out a determined Sharks fightback and set up a meeting with Sydney Crescent Star next Sunday in the Major Semi-Final.

Despite Sutherland dominating the match for long periods in the second half, the result went with the home side, who won the game almost entirely because of their solid backline. "Our effort in defence was simply outstanding and the best we have played all season," said Fraser Park coach Ian Gillan.

"Under immense pressure in the second half the boys hung in there and held out and I am very proud of the way we held our shape and marked up well."

Starting the match in positive fashion, the Dragons had five clear-cut chances to put the game away inside the first thirty minutes, but found the target only once. Faria's penalty, after he was chopped down by a careless Milan Cmokrak challenge, the only result from a first half that must have had coach Ian Gillan's sandy hair turning grey from frustration.



A hard tackle on Fraser Park's Mark Guerrero by Sharks midfielder Garth Moring raises the dust

Their afternoon best summed up during a goalmouth scramble when Faria was unable to get boot to ball when a mere two yards out with the goalkeeper well beaten. In the cut-throat world of semi-final football, they should have paid a heavy price for over indulgence, but instead they dug deep holding the Sharks at bay during a frenzied second half.

We did everything possible to win ten

games but today we just couldn't score," said Sutherland coach Vic Elul.

"We made a conscious decision at half-time to move Jason Connolly back into the midfield and that helped us control the possession, but it was our shooting that let us down."

Holding their shape well and going man for man, the Dragons backline held firm. Daniel Cunningham, Alex Leris and Scott Wells were absolutely brilliant in blanketing Matthew Borg, Iain MacDonald and Jason Connolly and forcing them to waste chances with long distance efforts. With Paul Bourke, Adam Mamoliti and Paul Candelori probing for an opening, the opportunities came thick and fast but the Dragons defence never missed a beat, always doing enough when it mattered.

Without the injured Derek Pomer, who failed a late fitness test with an injured shoulder, Sutherland struggled, their weakness in front of goals glaringly

1
0



Fraser Park goalkeeper Steve Angelov fumbles a high ball, under pressure from Sutherland's Matthew Borg

obvious. While Matthew Borg tried hard, he looked a little short on fitness after coming back from injury.

Jason Connolly did his best in the first half but was let down by some poor service from his midfielders.

But while the Sharks lamented what might have been, the afternoon belonged to Fraser Park. The foundations of their win built on a strong first half performance from Greg Collins and Martin Bourke whose creativity set up the win by helping to keep their opponents on the back foot.

Collins left the field with ten minutes to go, having aggravated a groin problem which has plagued most of his season so far. Sharks defender Milan Cmokrak is also struggling to be fit for next week's game after receiving an ankle injury in the early stages of the second half.

FRASER PARK DRAGONS: 1 Steve Angelov, 2 Daniel Cunningham, 3 Alex Leris, 4 Scott Wells, 5 Martin Bourke, 7 Mark Guerrero, 8 Ben Petrovski (12 Clint Mayberry 63' 9 Emmanuel Pajagangou 10 Greg Collins (19 David O'Han 80') 11 Antonio Faria, 14 Achilles Markopoulos
Coach, Ian Gillan

SUTHERLAND SHARKS: 1 Zlatko Jovosevic, 2 Milan Cmokrak (5 Mark Lancaster 47') 3 Matthew Dohm, 6 Paul Bourke, 7 Iain MacDonald, 8 Adam Mamoliti, 9 Matthew Borg, 12 Monte Pangle (13 Phil Badolato 77'), 15 Garth Moring, 17 Paul Candelori, 20 Jason Connolly
Coach, Vic Elul

Yellow Cards: Cmokrak (ss), 40' Bourke (pp), 79' Pajagangou (p), 82' Mamoliti (ss) 86' Referee, Greg Leverton
Assistant Referees, Alex Spiroski and Sam Di Imperio

FIRST DIVISION MAJOR SEMI FINAL

TIGERS CLAW THEIR WAY INTO GRAND FINAL

by Paul Goodwin

Two first half chances, one of which they put away, were all that the Premiers, Northern Tigers, needed to see off a tricky challenge from Wanderers Cedars at Ernie Smith Reserve on Sunday afternoon.

The dry and dusty conditions did not suit the Wanderers as well as the Tigers, a fact that both coaches agreed upon. Fred Mestis of the Tigers ventured this opinion before the game and the Wanderers' Jim Meerhuij said the same thing at its conclusion.

Despite pinning the Tigers back in their own half for long periods and having a decent share of the ball, Wanderers Cedars could not get their usual, excellent passing game going properly, relying mainly on wing play from the devastatingly difficult

Alan Wawi on the left and Gus Orcajo out wide on the right. In the middle, former Penrith star Fernando Dos Santos held sway, but even he could not manage anything of significance near goal, where returning Tigers captain Ricky Oppedisano stood tall all afternoon in the face of a torrent of high balls and awkward crosses.

When he wasn't there, the height of defender Damon Thompson and his team mates did all that was necessary to repel the invaders.

The Tigers began brightly and the game was only four minutes old when Ben Jenke was presented with the first chance, receiving a fine through pass from Scott Ryan.

Jenke drew the keeper, Owen Rodgers, out wide on the left of the area, but in attempting to place his shot just inside the right post he missed the target by a matter of

inches. The Wanderers were already well into the game and soon began to dictate terms with the very lively Wawi causing plenty of problems down the left.

In the 17th Wawi gave his marker the slip, but then put his volley just over the bar.

Minutes later George Issa got into the box on the right but his shot was blocked on the line by the well-positioned Ryan, and the danger passed once more. Orcajo also fired over the bar in the 28th - all those misses were to prove costly. In the 29th Tom Mikulski got the better of Wanderers' skipper Sam Awad, giving the wily midfielder the slip and then laying on a nice through pass for Oliver Gomm.

Gomm showed a striker's confidence in front of goal with a clinical finish from 12 yards to make it 1-0. Mikulski also came to the Tigers' rescue at the other end, nine

minutes later, clearing another Orcajo effort off the line following a Samu Nicola free kick.

The Wanderers continued the trend after the break and little was seen of the Tigers' attack in the second period.

Keeper Ricky Oppedisano had to come out and punch clear repeatedly. He was relieved to see a Dos Santos header just clear the bar in the 50th and a 30-yard Nicola free kick come straight into his waiting arms.

Opposition keeper Rodgers did have to leave his line early to deny Luke Femia, who had been set free by Jenke in the 63rd. These rare Tigers' attacks were a welcome respite for an overworked defence.

The only time the Tigers looked like adding to their score was in stoppage time, when Jenke burst clear only to be dragged back cynically by substitute Adarif

Azzedine, whose quick departure with a red card was the only option for referee Vic Gauci.

The last few minutes had seen Dos Santos send a free kick over the bar and Wawi continue to trouble the defence on the left flank, but his useful stream of crosses yielded nothing; whenever the ball was cleared, the longer range shots failed to trouble the Tigers.

Wanderers played the better football, or at least the more attractive form of it, but the Tigers showed how tight knit a combination they were and how to grind out a result when lacking flair and imagination.

They now advance to the Grand Final and may well meet their old foes, The Wanderers, there again, if this game's losing side can get past a tired Mount Pritchard at Niven Field next Sunday.

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● All information is courtesy of SOCCER NSW

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FROM THE SIDELINES

WITH GREG STOCK



Coastal Developments

The Central Coast Coasties have finally announced their coaching staff for season 2003/4 with Jim Foley getting the nod as head coach to be assisted by club stalwart Andrew Ollier. The Coasties have a new look and name this season after a successful merger with Mingara Lakers has seen them become Central Coast Football Inc (though the incorporation bit is still going through the legal paperwork).

Despite the dawning of a new entity the club is still having major headaches in trying to secure a ground while Plum Park undergoes some resurfacing. With Central Coast Stadium being used for the Rugby Union World Cup and Mingara's ground being used as a training facility the committee are working on a number of options in time for the opening round of the new Premier League season.

Camden Tigers
Out at the foot of the mountains the Panthers have also finalised their coaching roster for the season with Tony Rasmussen returning to look after the First Grade and Don Campbell being appointed for the Under-20's. Their assistants will be none other than former players Bob Casserly for First Grade and Danny Hinton for the Under-20's.

"While significant work has already been undertaken formalizing the nucleus of the first grade squad, a few positions remain open within the squad," said a club spokesman.

"Tony Rasmussen is keen to talk to any player that feels that they are worthy contenders for his main squad." Players looking to trial or seek a place in first grade squad are urged to contact Tony Rasmussen on 0418 611 883.

Turner Tunes Squad

Wollongong Wolves boss John Turner has made some moves this past week to round out his squad for the forthcoming National League season by signing a couple of high profile state leaguers. Ex Parramatta Eags utility Daniel Cummins has signed along with Fairfield Bulls midfielder Stewart van Bentum.

"I am very happy to have signed with the Wolves and I am looking forward to the start of the season and the opportunity to play in the National League," said Van Bentum. After some excellent performances in recent seasons with Macarthur and Fairfield it will be interesting to see how the talented midfielder develops alongside some of the country's brightest stars.

Harrison Leads the Way

Former Macarthur Rams and Fairfield Bulls midfielder Richard Harrison has resurrected playing for of all clubs, Second Division club Camden Tigers. Harrison is happy to be back after spending the last eighteen months in England as a coach with Leeds United.

"It was a good opportunity to head home and spend some time with family and friends," said Harrison. "I was working as a coach with the Leeds United youth setup as well as keeping fit playing with a couple of Saturday and Sunday teams to keep fit."

Congratulations

Cameron

Speaking of the Camden Tigers, congratulations are in order to the club on winning the Second Division Premiership under the stewardship of coach Eddie Briscoe.

The former Stanmore Hawks midfielder has put together a useful side that looks to be the overwhelming favourite to take the premiership/championship double. "It was an excellent result for the club and all the players and the committee deserve to be congratulated for an excellent season," said Briscoe, when FTS caught up with him on holidays on the N.S.W. North Coast.

"We have got a useful side here and if we can keep our momentum going into the final series we could really cap off a good year." When asked to point out a few players to keep an eye on Briscoe named midfielder Mario Rositano, captain Wes Horne, and striker Greg King.

King of Kettering

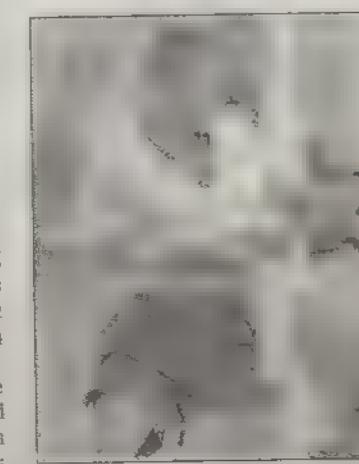
Former Fraser Park midfielder Ian King has been making quite an impression in non-league circles with new club side Kettering Town. King has scored two goals in Kettering's first three games to become a real pin-up boy on his return to the old country.

Hawks for NSL?

Stanmore Hawks finished their season on something of a high when they played out a 0-0 draw with Sydney Olympic in a hastily arranged trial game at Henson Park last Wednesday night.

With Newcastle United pulling out of the game at the last moment, the Hawks filled the breach putting in an inspired ninety minutes of football to hold out their highly-rated opponents.

"It was a tremendous effort by the boys and I was so happy that they were able to finish the year on a high," said coach Sotiris Mavros. Played in front of 400 or so hearty spectators the game was of a high standard, with both sides having a goal disallowed. Steve Liavas, David James and Chris Hunt having good games for the Hawks while Dimitri N'coloua did some nice things in an Olympic shirt, a guest of Olympic coach Peter Papenakatis.



Things get a bit shirtless in the Super League finals

NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE GRAND FINAL

SLIM WIN MAKES UNI CHAMPIONS

Sydney University were crowned champions of the 2003 Womens State League on Sunday after they defeated St George Association 1-0 at Lidcombe Oval.

Lyndal Hudson put Uni ahead in the 15th minute and the students never really looked like relinquishing their lead after that.

The goal was easy on the eye. Catriona Watt made a fast break down the left and drilled a low cross in towards the waiting Hudson. The striker finished neatly, scooping the ball over St George keeper Fiona Smith with the side of her boot.

The match swept to and fro for the remainder of the first half, but the larger Sydney Uni side had the edge in possession and goal scoring chances.

University's Melissa Pennington hit the bar with a curling free kick in the 21st minute, and then shot over when presented with another chance a minute later.

St George were mostly restricted to wayward long-range efforts in the early stages, although sprightly midfielder Fiona Forster beat three players in a run from the byline, before shooting just wide in the 39th.

Uni started the second half in good form. Another Watt dash down the sideline resulted in a shot from Astrid Loch-Wilkinson that cannoned off the near post.

St George began to apply some pressure as the half wore on. Annae Baker was prominent in the Saints revival, setting up several chances, although the closest they came was a Forster header that sailed over the bar in the 80th minute.

In the end, Sydney University absorbed the danger and held out the spirited St. George side - an outstanding effort considering that up to eight Uni players were back-up from the Under-21s Grand Final earlier in the day.

Best for the students were Watt, Loch-

Wilkinson, Rebekah Lucas and Gemma Connell. For St. George, Forster, Courtney Snedden and defender Danielle Pringle stood out.

Wilkinson, Rebekah Lucas and Gemma Connell. For St. George, Forster, Courtney Snedden and defender Danielle Pringle stood out.

It was a tough struggle, and the toughest team won out on the day, though the St. George Association can take credit from a tenacious performance by their young team

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY: Emma-Kate Dewhurst, Gemma Connell, Melissa Pennington, Tina Christoforou, Carly Debenham, Isabel Power, Catriona Watt, Rebekah Lucas, Lyndal Hudson, Renee Shirley, Astrid Loch-Wilkinson. Coach: Elvis DeMarchi

ST GEORGE ASSOCIATION: Fiona Smith, Naomi Jones, Danielle Pringle, Sarah-Jones Courtney Snedden, Annae Baker, Fiona Forster, Gemma Thompson, Natalie Saunders, Sarah Lansley, Rachel Wood, Maissa Sae, Brooke Starrett. Coach: Peter Coats

UNSW WIN UNDER 21'S

It was the Effie Zenardo show at Lidcombe Oval on Sunday morning, as the University of NSW claimed victory in the 2003 Womens State League championship. The stocky striker scored a hat-trick, helping her side to a 3-1 win over close rivals Sydney University.

She opened the scoring with a well-struck free kick early in the second half, and UNSW appeared to be the stronger of the two sides as the match wore on.

Sydney Uni came out firing after conceding the 50th minute goal, and it was no surprise when they nabbed an equaliser, although it did arrive in an unexpected manner.

UNSW keeper Chrissie Magoulias was deceived by a seemingly-tame back-pass on the bumpy surface, and the ball trickled in to the net, shadowed by Sydney Uni substitute Astrid Loch-Wilkinson.

Just as things looked to swinging in favour of Sydney University, Zanardo

bobbed up in the 75th minute with a mazy run that resulted in her second goal. She beat several players, rode several tough tackles, and almost willed the ball into the net. She added her third, three minutes later, twisting in mid-air to head home a dipping Ruth Jago cross.

The champions were best served by Zanardo, Ruth Jago and the solid Virginia Villar. Sydney Uni were best served by Carly Debenham, Alex Stewart and captain Cindy DeGouveia.

FIRST DIVISION MINOR SEMI FINAL

TEN-MAN MOUNTIES SHADE HURSTVILLE

by Paul Goodwin

Hurstville bowed out of the 2003 Finals Series when they went down on penalties to a ten-man Mount Pritchard side at Nineveh Field on Saturday afternoon.

The game was played with low intensity for most of the opening period, but the Mounties did appear to have the upper hand all the same.

With defender Richard Plesa out of action with a calf injury sustained at training and several other injured players in the camp, Hurstville had rushed Robert Babacic back from suspension and into the starting line up.

The club had only had two men sent off all season, and one of those was Babacic, whose suspension was lifted on appeal. But the move did not have a happy ending - Babacic was again sent off here, this time during the first stage of extra time.

Hurstville soaked up some early pressure well

In the seventh minute a ball that went through Joe Moric to Steve Zoric resulted in Miro Maco having a shot that was well saved by ZSC keeper Robert Mustapic.

In the eighth minute, a Hurstville hand ball handed the Mounties a free kick. Julian Volpati's tapped to Joe Moric, whose shot was deflected, eventually, wide.

In the 24th Craig Morton's free kick from the edge of the 18-yard box was cleared, but was kicked, and the ball fell for Mountie Jason Vella, whose shot then went well over the bar. The same player put another over the bar in the 38th.

A big run upfield in the 34th by the busy Volpati found Steve Zoric out wide, and his cross back in for Maco led to a shot that ZSC's Mustapic again held well.

In the 36th, Hurstville's Anthony Jusic placed a good through ball for Kreso Tarkes, whose effort was hastily cleared by Craig Morton.

In the 41st, a Morton free kick upfield saw the ball played through to Glen Lowe and David Gardiner before an eventual shot from

Steve Zoric was gathered by the keeper. And in the 44th a Hurstville free kick was drilled into the Mounties wall.

The same pattern continued, with neither side looking capable of scoring.

The Hurstville midfield was right out of touch on this occasion, according to coach John Gagro, who felt that despite this his side had three good chances to score, but simply failed to put them away.

The score sheet remained blank at half time, but on the hour mark Jusic managed to find the net after a Mounties player had gone down in a tackle, players and, with officials calling for the ball to be kicked out, Hurstville played on and scored.

The Mounties best player, Joe Moric, was dismissed by referee Wayne Crabb for protesting the decision.

Mt. Pritchard drew level in the 68th, when substitute ZSC defender Ante Majetic handled in the area and the resulting penalty was put away by David Gardiner.

And so to extra time, with Mount Pritchard almost sealing it in the 102nd minute, when a move involving John Cosentino, Adam Hartas, Glen Lowe and Gardiner saw the latter's header go just wide.

Neither side could do any better in the additional half hour of play, so it all came down to the dreaded penalties.

Things began very badly for Hurstville when their regularly successful penalty taker Dean Culina hit his kick high enough for the keeper to tip over the bar, giving the Mounties the perfect start.

Mustapic next saved from Mt. Pritchard's Graham Yon, and the next three takers all scored for each side.

It finally came down to a contest between the last two takers, Hurstville's Joe Simic, who missed and Mt. Pritchard's Fabian Sceris, who didn't.

Overall the Mounties had the better of the play and lifted further when Joe Moric was dismissed.

Mt. Pritchard now continue their quest to again take out the Grand Final, and thereby

defend their title. Once more they will have to do it from fourth place.

While it was all smiles in the Mount Pritchard camp, Hurstville mentor John Gagro felt that his side had played poorly in both finals' matches and was a shadow of the side that had played so well in the campaign proper.

He put this down to fatigue, a rash of injuries, the loss of several key players returning to their parent clubs and a malaise brought about by the disappointment of not winning the league.

He also felt that some of his senior players might have taken more responsibility for the penalties in the shoot out stage of the game. The younger ones were entrusted with the onerous task.

"We were flat and the training has not been too good for weeks", Gagro explained.

"We played good football all season but left that behind in the finals series. The Mounties were the better side, even with ten men."

HURSTVILLE ZSC: Robbie Musapic, Stevie Mavros, Steve Musak, Dean Culina, Anthony Jusic, Joe Badrov, Ante Majetic (s2), Joe Galetta (s2), Miro Maco, Robert Babacic, Jason Vella, Kar Luburic (Dave Pavetic s2), Kreso Tarkes.
Sub not used: Steve Vuljanic (RGK) and Tony Mihaljevic.

Coach: John Gagro

MOUNT PRITCHARD: Mick Hartas, John Cosentino, Julian Volpati, Craig Morton, Steve Zoric, Fabian Sceris (s2), Matt Hill, Glen Lowe, David Gardiner, Joe Moric, Miro Maco, Graham Yon, Nathan Zalewski, Adam Hartas (s2).
Sub not used: Ian Lumsden (RGK) and Joshua Saunderson.
Coach: Darryl Glover.
Referee: Wayne Crabb

Assistant Referees: Jim Barnes and Michael Collins

Red Cards: Hurstville ZSC: Robert Babacic (s2), Mount Pritchard: Joe Moric (s2).
Yellow Cards: Hurstville ZSC: Anthony Jusic (s2), Mount Pritchard: Joe Moric (s2), Miro Maco (s2), Graham Yon, Matt Hill, Glen Lowe, David Gardiner, Joe Moric, Miro Maco, Graham Yon, Nathan Zalewski, Adam Hartas (s2).
Goals: Hurstville ZSC: Miro Maco, Joe Moric (s2), Mount Pritchard: Joe Moric (s2), Miro Maco (s2), Graham Yon, Matt Hill, Glen Lowe, David Gardiner, Joe Moric, Miro Maco, Graham Yon, Nathan Zalewski, Adam Hartas (s2).
Goalscorers: Hurstville ZSC: Miro Maco (s2), Mount Pritchard: Joe Moric (s2), Miro Maco (s2), Graham Yon, Matt Hill, Glen Lowe, David Gardiner, Joe Moric, Miro Maco, Graham Yon, Nathan Zalewski, Adam Hartas (s2).
Goalscorers: Hurstville ZSC: Miro Maco (s2), Mount Pritchard: Joe Moric (s2), Miro Maco (s2), Graham Yon, Matt Hill, Glen Lowe, David Gardiner, Joe Moric, Miro Maco, Graham Yon, Nathan Zalewski, Adam Hartas (s2).



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NSW SUPER LEAGUE ELIMINATION SEMI-FINAL

WANDERERS EXTINGUISH AC PASSION

AC United

Hajduk Wanderers

by Paul Goodwin

Nothing went right for AC United in their 'home game' elimination semi final at Abruzzi Oval on Saturday afternoon.

With inspirational midfielder Robbie Sacco turning up only to find himself out through suspension, after picking up his fifth caution the previous week, the team suffered a further blow when Javier Mancino failed a late fitness test. Worse was to come.

As experienced defender Robbie Grubba acknowledged after the game - and with which his coach, Nick Porreca,

could only nod in agreement - the team did not play it smart at all.

"We were dumb," said Grubba. "We did some stupid things out there!"

What Grubba and Porreca agreed was so awful was a succession of needless penalties - three, no less - despite having just as much of the game as their opponents and not really being under great pressure at any time.

Hajduk Wanderers, on the other hand, could well have been caught at the post by AC who stormed back in the closing stages, after being let off the hook at 2-0.

Taking his third penalty of the game, in the 67th minute, Chris Camilleri

But Rivera was handed a yellow card for taking a dive instead, to the surprise of many in the crowd.

It had been Rivera who had needlessly brought down Camilleri, in the 12th minute, when the Hajduk man appeared safely held, out wide on the edge of the box. That offence inside the area drew the first penalty award of the game.

Camilleri converted, after some mind games between him and the keeper.

AC were playing the better football, with the wind in their faces, and should have drawn level in the 19th, but Chris Giometti's attempt to place Ghisso's pass just inside Schwarzer's left post missed by inches.

Giometti's chip from 15 yards in the 38th was then tipped over the bar, as luck continued to desert the more 'local' of the two Fairfield district sides.

Then came a second goal for Hajduk, once more against the general run of play.

While Tim Gledhill and Navid Varess were looking good up front, along with Camilleri in support, they did not get as many chances to break through as the AC men did with their own stronger midfield.

Varess was pushing down the left in the 41st minute, and apparently only looking for options, when Mandic raced across to intervene, though his keeper already appeared to have the ball covered.

Varess came clattering down and Delovski had no choice but to point to the spot yet again.

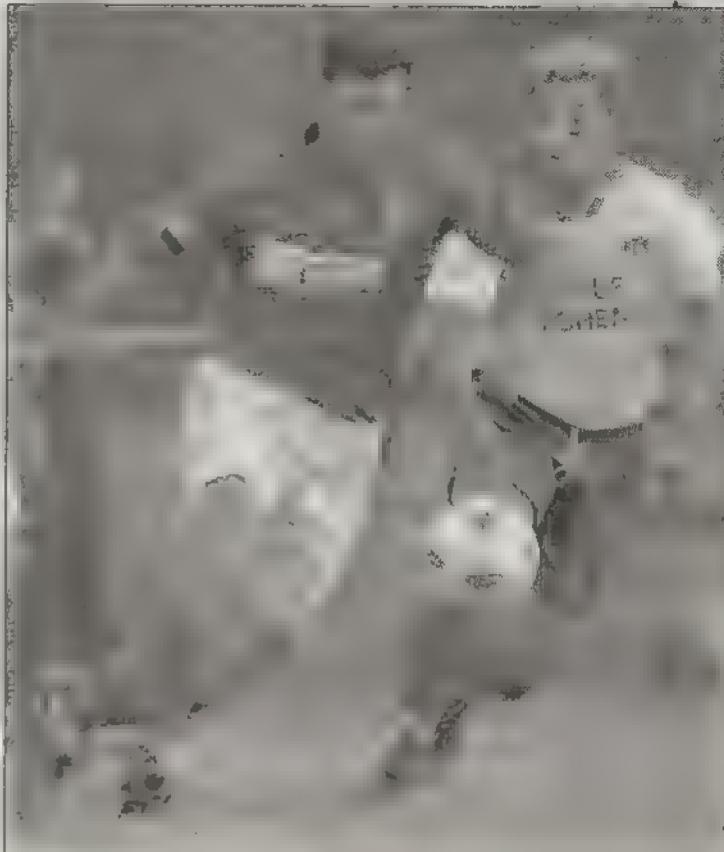
Camilleri continued to take his time with the kick and Fernandez was once again unable to get near the ball after the psychological battle had been played out.

The second half began with Robbie Grubba's free kick being nodded wide by Rick Giometti, while at the other end Gledhill got the better of Mandic, but the Hajduk man could only balloon his shot well over from close range, when well-positioned to score.

Mandic then committed his second penalty faux pas of the match in the 67th but this time the opportunity to seal the game early was spurned by Camilleri.

AC began to liven up from that point and skipper Dom Oliverio skinned the bar with a smart shot from 30 yards out, in the 74th minute.

Three minutes later it looked as if AC might get on the scoresheet, when Rivera



AC captain Dominic Oliveira tussles with Hajduk scorer Chris Camilleri

tangled with Hajduk substitute Mate Jedinak, but again referee Delovski was unimpressed by the appeals of the players.

Hajduk took off both Gledhill and Varess and brought on more defenders, only to find themselves under much more pressure than they had been all game.

Zia Younan had a goal-bound shot deflected wide for a corner in the 80th. A minute later, appeals for a handball on the line by Hajduk defender Ryan Manente also went unheeded, though it did look as if the player may have been struck on the leg and moved his hand down instinctively a split second later.

Varess came clattering down and Delovski had no choice but to point to the spot yet again.

Camilleri continued to take

tom right corner. AC lost all chance of forcing extra time in the 89th minute, when Rivera burst into the box but shot far too quickly, sending a volley high over the bar with the keeper completely exposed.

At that stage of the game a goal would have probably been enough to spur AC to the win, but full credit to Hajduk for playing the more sensible soccer, taking the win and thereby passing into next week's Minor Semi Final.

Things became a little heated after the game as the perceived injustices of the sporting life bubbled to the surface among supporters of both teams.

But, once the dust settled, it was clear that the team that had best kept its composure won the day and that was all it needed on this occasion.



Hajduk Wanderers captain Mark Abi-Arrage (left) denies all responsibility

AC United striker John Ghisso pulls away from a trio of Wanderers

AC UNITED: Claudio Fernandez, Robbie Grubba, Ray Mandic, Javier Mancino, 64, Dominic Oliverio, 17, Enzo Sensone, John Kelso, Nathan Rivera, Michael McGovern, Adrian Zombo, 84, Rick Giometti, Zia Younan, 86, Chris Giometti, John Ghisso. *Subs not used:* Peter Akers, RGK and Charlie Monteleone. *Coach:* Nick Porreca.

HAJDUK WANDERERS: Daniel Schwarzer, Robert Kujan, Eddie Wong, 46, Mark Abi-Arrage, 17, Ryan Manente, Anthony Hartshorn, Todd Brodie, Paul Cusp, Ante Mrdjen, Navid Varess, Tim Gledhill, Mate Jedinak, 76, Chris Camilleri. *Subs not used:* Philip Zabek, RGK and Peter Farat. *Coach:* Tommy McCulloch.

Referee: Srebre Delovski. **Assistant Referees:** Peter Apostolou and Peter Vukovski. **Yellow Cards:** AC United: Nathan Rivera, 32, Ray Mandic, 41, Rick Giometti, 41; Hajduk Wanderers: Chris Camilleri, 17, Mark Abi-Arrage, 34.

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MAJOR SEMI FINAL

MINOR SEMI FINAL

with Greg Stock

Sydney CS

Fraser Park

Lidcombe Oval is the venue for Sunday's blockbuster - Sydney Crescent Star hosting Fraser Park Dragons with a spot in the Grand Final on offer for the winner. While this game looks to be the match of the season so far, it has lost a little of its glamour after news that Crescent Star's number one marksman Tanju Balabanel won't be starting after he was given a two week suspension arising from his send off in the AC United game.

That aside, Crescent Star goes into the game as the overwhelming favorites on the back of their premiership winning season. A training run against Wollongong was followed by the weekend off with coach Yasir Ozdenak looking to focus in on the Dragons. In the absence of Balabanel, Hans Sevgin had a sensational game against AC United two weeks ago,

scoring a goal and setting up another for Joe Brun.

He is expected to be retained at striker to start alongside Phil Marzec, which will allow Brun to come from the bench midway through the second half if required. The only player causing any concern for Ozdenak is Huseyin Bayhan who is still troubled by a niggling groin concern. The weeks rest should do him the world of good and he is expected to play at least some part in the match.

The main area of concern for Crescent Star has always been their defence and all eyes will be on Evangelos Petratos, Askin Oygu and Tayfun Devrimol.

If they can hold Emmanuel Papageorgiou, Mark Guerrero and Antonio Faria they will go very close to winning this game.

Fraser Park, on the other hand, had to come through an arm wrestle with Sutherland last weekend and have a number of players with injury con-

cerns. Midfielder Greg Collins is nursing a groin strain, stopper Daniel Cunningham has a neck problem while forward Antonio Faria is undergoing physiotherapy on his injured back.

"There are no excuses from us on the injury toll" said Dragons coach Ian Gillan. "We lost Liam Austin to Wollongong and Ian King a while back and we bounced back, so we'll take it in our stride and do the best we can this week." Defensively, Fraser Park were top notch last weekend, blanketing the Sharks in a solid display that augers well for this match.

The key to a Dragons victory will be their defence. If they can keep the lightning fast Crescent Star forward line under control, and allow Martin Bourke to control the midfield, they should be able to do enough to sneak home with the points. From their two previous meetings this year, the honours are even with one win apiece.

But in the rigors of semi-final

Sutherland Sharks

Hajduk Wanderers

Sutherland's first semi-final since 1991 last weekend wasn't what coach Vic Ellul was hoping for but, despite the setback, the Sharks boss remains upbeat about his sides chances this week.

"We struggled to put the ball in the net against Fraser Park, simple as that," said Ellul. "We dominated the second half but our shooting was poor and we allowed ourselves to waste chances and we paid a very high price."

The injury toll is also starting to make an impact with Derek Poimer still no certainty to play after a shoulder problem forced his late withdrawal last week end. With Milan Cmokrak struggling with an ankle problem and Matthew Borg still nursing a troublesome groin, the Sharks depth is going to be

sorely tested.

Paul Bourke has also played his last game for the club, leaving Ellul struggling to name his eleven. "We will have a look at the boys at training and make some hard decisions then," said Ellul.

"It might mean we have to wait until just before kick-off to name a side so we'll take it day by day and see how the boys pull up."

Hajduk coach Tommy McCulloch fared no better with his charges last weekend after their torrid 2-1 win over

AC United. The good news is that Tim Gledhill is back to full fitness and Trent Worrall, who missed the AC game with a corked thigh, should be a starter.

But the bad news is that Peter Farac has damaged his ankle and is out for the season while Mate Jedinak was sent off last weekend and will get at least a one week suspension.

With Nahuel Arrarte gone to Wollongong, the depth at Hajduk is

also in the spotlight with everything riding on the outcome of this match.

"Sutherland are a very strong side and have the ability to score goals from anywhere on the park," said McCulloch.

"In our previous game they scored three goals from 30 yards which means defensively we need to be on our game if we are to have a chance."

In previous meetings this season, Sutherland defeated Hajduk in both games: 1-0 and 4-3. That statistic means little in the rough and tumble world of elimination football, though it is hard to go past the Sharks' recent good form when trying to tip a winner.

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE SCOREBOARD

Major Semi Finals

FIRST GRADE

Sydney Crescent Star	v	Fraser Park	Sunday 7th September	2.30pm	Lidcombe Oval
U21	1	1			
AC United	v	Fraser Park	Sunday 7th September	12.00pm	Lidcombe Oval
U21	1	1			
Sydney Crescent Star	v	Manly-Warringah	Sunday 7th September	10.00am	Lidcombe Oval
U21	1	1			

Minor Semi Finals

FIRST GRADE

Sutherland Sharks	v	Hajduk Wanderers	Saturday 6th September	2.30pm	Hajduk Stadium
U21	1	1			
Hajduk Wanderers	v	Sutherland Sharks	Saturday 6th September	12.00pm	Hajduk Stadium
U21	1	1			
Dulwich Hill	v	Fraser Park	Saturday 6th September	10.00am	Hajduk Stadium
U21	1	1			

SUPER LEAGUE GOALSCORERS

26 - Tanju Balabanel (Sydney CS)
13 - Antonio Faria (Fraser Park)
12 - Anthony Sammonas (Stanmore Hawks)
11 - Rob Smithies (Sydney University)
10 - Liam Austin (Fraser Park)
9 - Yavus Ekinci (Sydney Crescent Star), Chris Giometti (AC Utd), Emmanuel Papageorgiou (Fraser Park)
8 - Tim Wilson (Sydney Uni), Tim Gledhill (Hajduk Wanderers)
Jean-Loup Rousseau (Dulwich Hill)
7 - Justin Creighton (Manly-Warringah), Derek Poimer (Sutherland), Andrew Borg (Macarthur), Mark Guerrero (Fraser Park), Nabil Veress (Hajduk Wanderers)

FIRST GRADE

AC UNITED	1	HAJDUK WANDERERS	2
(J Ghiso 83')		(C Camilleri 12/41' penalties)	
FRASER PARK DRAGONS	1	SUTHERLAND SHIRE	0
(A Faria 15' penalty)			

UNDER 21

MANLY WARRINGAH	1	SUTHERLAND SHIRE	3
HAJDUK WANDERERS	0	FRASER PARK DRAGONS	3

UNDER 19

AC UNITED	1	FRASER PARK DRAGONS	2
MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS	3	DULWICH HILL	0



Final Standings

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Sydney Crescent Star	24	15	5	4	64	39	25	50
Fraser Park Dragons	24	15	4	5	58	26	32	49
Sutherland Sharks	24	12	7	5	44	30	14	43
AC United	24	12	7	5	38	28	10	43
Hajduk Wanderers	24	11	9	4	41	23	18	42
Stanmore Hawks	24	11	4	9	40	44	-4	37
H'ville City Minotaurs	24	8	7	9	34	46	-12	31
Manly Warringah Dolphins	24	7	8	9	39	40	-1	29
Sydney University	24	9	2	13	36	40	-4	29
Dulwich Hill	24	5	6	13	34	48	-14	21
MSC Liverpool	24	5	6	13	23	37	-14	21
Ryde City	24	5	5	14	32	55	-23	20
Macarthur Rams	24	3	6	15	21	48	-27	15

UNDER 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
AC United	24	17	3	4	67	22	45	54
Hajduk Wanderers	24	16	5	3	53	16	37	53
Fraser Park Dragons	24	16	2	6	59	29	30	50
Manly Warringah Dolphins	24	13	7	4	52	31	21	46
Sutherland Sharks	24	13	4	7	52	36	16	43
Dulwich Hill	24	14	1	9	38	29	9	43
Stanmore Hawks	24	11	3	10	40	34	6	36
Sydney University	24	9	7	8	39	33	6	34
Macarthur Rams	24	5	6	13	27	53	-26	21
MSC Liverpool	24	4	8	12	32	45	-13	20
H'ville City Minotaurs	24	5	2	17	29	68	-39	17
Ryde City	24	4	3	17	22	64	-42	15
Sydney Crescent Star	24	2	3	19	37	87	-50	9

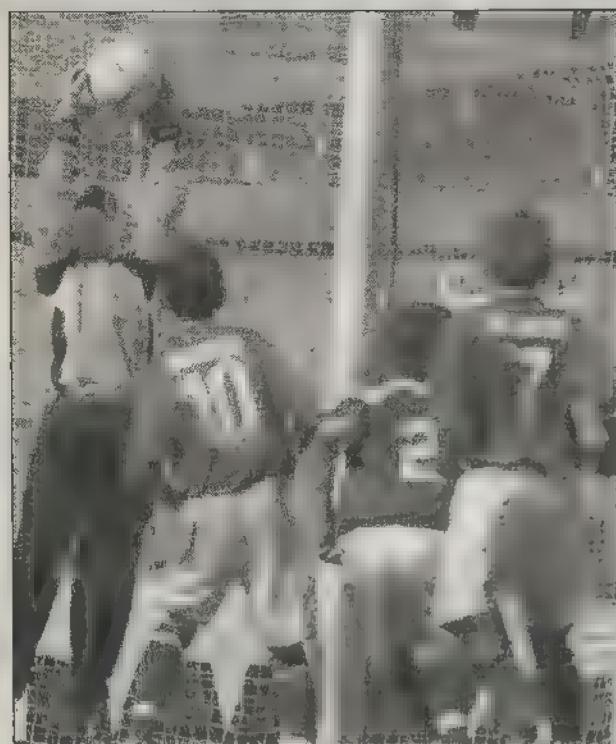
UNDER 19

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YOUTH LEAGUE RESULTS

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: FINAL SERIES:

ELIMINATION SEMI FINALS:

GRADE 12: Olympic Sharks 0 Wollongong Wolves

GRADE 13: Olympic Sharks 1 Parramatta Eagles 0

GRADE 14: Blacktown City 4 Parramatta Eagles 3

Extra time (3-3 Full time)

GRADE 15: Blacktown City 4 Olympic Sharks 1

GRADE 16: Bankstown City Cubs 1 Wollongong

Wolves 2 Extra time (1-1 Full time)

ELIMINATION FINALS:

GRADE 12: Northern Spirit 2 Marconi 0

GRADE 13: Northern Spirit 0 Sutherland Sharks 1

GRADE 14: Wollongong Wolves 1 Olympic Sharks

2 Extra time (1-1 Full time)

GRADE 15: Bankstown City Cubs 1 Northern Spirit

2

GRADE 17: Olympic Sharks 3 Blacktown City 2

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE - FINAL SERIES:

ELIMINATION SEMI FINALS:

GRADE 12: Northern Tigers 1 AC United 0

GRADE 13: Nepean Association 0 Macarthur Rams 1

GRADE 14: Northern Tigers 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1

GRADE 15: Eastern Suburbs 3 Manly Warringah

Dolphins 4 Penrith (1-1 F/T 1-1 E/T)

GRADE 17: Hills United 0 Fairfield Bulls 1

ELIMINATION SEMI FINALS:

GRADE 12: Macarthur Rams 1 Eastern Suburbs 2

GRADE 13: Blacktown Association 1 Manly

Warringah Dolphins 0

GRADE 14: Eastern Suburbs 5 Macarthur Rams 4

Penalties (1-1 F/T 1-1 E/T)

GRADE 15: St George 4 Hills United 5 Penalties

(1-1 F/T 1-1 E/T)

GRADE 17: Northern Tigers 2 Hajduk Wanderers 0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE - FINAL SERIES: PRELIMINARY SEMI FINAL:

GRADE 12: Wollongong United 0 Granville

Association 1

GRADE 13: Schofields Scorpions 1 Mt Pritchard 3

GRADE 14: Canterbury Bankstown 8 Ryde City 7

Penalties (0-0 F/T 0-0 E/T)

GRADE 15: Mt Pritchard 4 Schofields Scorpions 1

GRADE 17: Dulwich Hill 2 Hawkesbury City 4

ELIMINATION SEMI FINALS:

GRADE 12: MSC Liverpool 3 Parramatta City 2

GRADE 13: Granville Association 0 Ryde City 1

GRADE 14: Dulwich Hill 2 Mt Pritchard 1

GRADE 15: Ryde City 4 Rockdale City Suns 1

GRADE 17: Parramatta City 1 Wollongong United 2

Extra Time (1-1 F/T)

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE - RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 10:

GRADE 14: Central Coast Coasters 2 St George

Association 0

GRADE 16: Central Coast Coasters 0 St George

Association 1

GRADE 12: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Macarthur

Rams 1

GRADE 14: Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Macarthur

Rams 0

GRADE 16: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Macarthur

Rams 0

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 12

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

P W D L F A GD Pts

Macarthur Rams 23 19 3 1 91 9 82 60

Manly Warringah 24 19 2 3 90 13 77 56

Nepean Association 23 17 4 2 81 12 69 55

St George Assoc 23 15 3 5 71 22 49 48

Central Coast 23 14 2 7 52 33 19 44

NW Sydney Koalas 23 11 5 7 52 26 26 38

Olympic Sharks 23 11 2 10 42 33 9 35

Northern Tigers 23 10 4 9 56 50 6 34

Wollongong Wolves 23 5 5 13 27 45 18 20

Blacktown Assoc 23 4 4 15 26 67 41 16

Marconi 23 3 4 16 16 45 29 13

Southern Branch 23 2 2 19 10 92 82 8

Granville Magpies 23 0 0 23 0 167 167 0

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

P W D L F A GD Pts

Southern Branch 23 22 1 0 99 10 89 67

Marconi 23 17 5 1 84 12 72 56

Olympic Sharks 23 15 3 5 62 19 43 48

Wollongong Wolves 23 13 6 4 55 16 39 45

NW Sydney Koalas 23 13 5 5 66 14 52 44

Blacktown Assoc 23 1 5 7 78 30 48 38

Nepean Association 23 12 2 9 58 31 27 38

Manly Warringah 24 9 5 10 43 31 12 32

Macarthur Rams 23 6 11 41 37 4 24

Granville Magpies 23 6 0 17 19 97 78 18

St George Assoc 23 3 1 19 15 109 94 10

Northern Tigers 23 2 1 20 12 83 81 7

Central Coast 23 1 0 22 8 141-133 3

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

P W D L F A GD Pts

Olympic Sharks 23 20 2 1 81 14 67 62

Manly Warringah 24 19 2 3 55 8 47 59

NW Sydney Koalas 23 17 3 3 61 14 47 54

Macarthur Rams 23 15 3 5 53 23 30 48

Central Coast 23 12 5 6 52 21 31 41

Marconi 23 10 3 10 48 36 12 33

Wollongong Wolves 23 10 3 10 31 33 2 33

Nepean Association 23 6 6 11 24 28 4 24

St George Assoc 23 7 3 13 28 43 15 24

Southern Branch 23 7 2 14 35 46 13 23

Northern Tigers 23 5 5 13 18 36 18 20

Blacktown Assoc 23 3 1 19 30 65 35 10

Granville Magpies 23 0 0 23 3 150-147 0

HOPE METROPOLITAN LEAGUE FINAL SERIES: PRELIMINARY

ELIMINATION SEMI FINALS:

GRADE 11: Gladysville Hornsby Association 2

Granville Association 1

ELIMINATION FINALS:

GRADE 11: Eastern Suburbs Association 1

Macarthur Rams 3



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19 high school teams participated in the 2003 Girls Gala Day at Valentine Park

Vale Graeme Ikin

The Sydney soccer fraternity, and Blacktown City Demons in particular, were saddened to learn of the death of Graeme Ikin last Wednesday, at the relatively young age of 66.

Graeme was a dedicated worker for his beloved Blacktown City Soccer Club, being one of the founder members and held the Club's Badge No. 38. He joined the club in the 1960's when it was known as Toongabbie and played as a goalkeeper.

He also managed youth and senior teams after his playing days. He served many years as a Director of the Club during the 1970s and 80s and was part of the backbone of the club during its most progressive years, that saw it venture briefly into the National League.

He became the initial ground announcer when Blacktown moved to the Gabbie Stadium and always welcomed visiting club officials and members of the media to his lofty abode at the back of the grandstand. He was a perfectionist at his job and became the benchmark for ground announcers in the Sydney competition. He was known locally as "The Voice of The Gabbie".

Current Demons President, Ken Schrembi said the club was devastated by Graeme's passing. "He was the inspiration behind the club building and moving to, Gabbie Stadium", said Ken. "His dedication and hard work, inspired everybody to get involved and he was the main man behind the club bringing out Bobby Charlton and Kevin Keegan as guest players.

'Even in his latter years, when his health was badly deteriorating, and his eyesight fading quickly, Graeme would be a regular visitor to the press box at the Gabbie and even though he couldn't see the game, he would ask me, or anybody else around, to let him know what was going on. The club, and soccer, has lost a valuable and great servant.'

Graeme was also a very keen, gifted cricketer and captained the local Seven Hills cricket team for a number of years.

Graeme is survived by his two children, Lorraine and Stephen, his three step children Shane, Craig and Michelle, and his wife Beryl.

FIRST ROUND CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS DRAW

Rd	Date	Team A	Team B	Age	Ground	Time
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Bankstown	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Sydney Amateur Lge	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nepean	0-5	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Eastern Suburbs	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Manly Warringah	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	03s	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	Far North Coast	Granville	03s	Crawford Park	12:00
1	14/09/2003	Shoalhaven	Ku Ring Ga	03s	South Nowra S.F. 3	13:00
1	14/09/2003	S'th Tabelands	Gladesville Hornsby	03s	Cookbundoon Pk	
					(Hockey Pk) 1	
1	14/09/2003	Highlands	Sutherland	03s	Yerrinbool Oval 2	3:00
1	14/09/2003	Central Coast	Canterbury	03s	Blair Park	3:00
1	14/09/2003	Orange	Southern Districts	0-5	Jack Brabham Park 4	4:00
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Bankstown	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	Albury Wodonga	BYE	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Southern Districts	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Granville	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Manly Warringah	AAW	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	Wagga Wagga	Macarthur	AAW	Gisling Oval	11:30
1	14/09/2003	Holiday Coast	Eastern Suburbs	AAW	Ayreshire Park	12:00
1	14/09/2003	S'th Tabelands	NW Sydney	AAW	Cookbundoon Pk	
					(Hockey Pk) 3	
1	14/09/2003	Shoalhaven	Ku Ring Ga	AAW	South Nowra S.F. 4	13:00
1	14/09/2003	Dubbo	Nepean	AAW	Lady Cutler Res. 2	3:00
1	14/09/2003	Central Coast	Canterbury	AAW	Ron Routley Oval 2	14:30
1	14/09/2003	Highlands	Sutherland	AAW	Yerrinbool Oval 2	15:00
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Gladesville Hornsby	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Southern Districts	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Granville	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	Albury Wodonga	Sydney Amateur Lge	AA	Aloysious Park	10:00
1	14/09/2003	Holiday Coast	Eastern Suburbs	AA	Mc Lean Street, Oval 1	10:30
					Mitchell Park 1	10:30
1	14/09/2003	South West Slopes	Blacktown	AA	Lady Cutler Res. 1	13:00
1	14/09/2003	Dubbo	Nepean	AA	Hanging Rock	
1	14/09/2003	Eurobodala	Bankstown	AA	Complex	14:00
					Yerrinbool, Oval 1	14:30
1	14/09/2003	Highlands	Sutherland	AA	Proctor Park 1	14:30
1	14/09/2003	Macarthur	Manly Warringah	AA	Blair Park	15:00
1	14/09/2003	Central Coast	Canterbury	AA	South Nowra S.F. 1	15:00
1	14/09/2003	Shoalhaven	Ku Ring Ga	AA	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Sutherland	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Granville	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nepean	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Southern Districts	21	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	S'th Tabelands	Gladesville Hornsby	21	Cookbundoon Pk	
					(Hockey Pk) 1	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nepean	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Gladesville Hornsby	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Illawarra	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Sutherland	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Granville	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Manly Warringah	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Southern Districts	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Bankstown	18	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	Shoalhaven	Ku Ring Ga	18	South Nowra S.F. 2	2:00
1	14/09/2003	Central Coast	Canterbury	18	Mackay Park	3:30
1	14/09/2003	BYE	BYF	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Bankstown	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nepean	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Albury Wodonga	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Canterbury	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Southern Districts	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Gladesville Hornsby	17	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Granville	17	Thistle Park	2:00
1	14/09/2003	BYE	St George	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Macarthur	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nepean	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Nth West Women	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Bankstown	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Illawarra	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYF	Eastern Suburbs	16W	BYE	
1	14/09/2003	BYE	Blacktown	16W	BYE	

(Round 1 Champion of Champions Draw continued next week)

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NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE GRAND FINAL

LEDBROOK LEADS NSW TO VICTORY

A sensational golden goal from Catherine Cannuli gave NSW Academy the 2003 Womens Super League Championship with a 1-0 extra-time win over gallant challengers Northern NSW.

The two Academy teams met in the Grand Final at Lidcombe Oval on Sunday night, and both failed to score over 10 minutes of absorbing action.

It was always going to take something special to break the deadlock in this intense contest, and Cannuli finally did it with a world-class strike, just as the crowd were beginning to contemplate a penalty shoot-out. The match appeared to winding to a close when the NSW forward received the ball wide on the right.

But, instead of laying off a pass, she pivoted and struck a bri i am shot on the turn that curled 30 yards and found the top corner of the net.

It made a fitting end to a match that was a splendid advertisement for elite women's football. NSW Academy deserved the victory, but their Northern rivals fought hard throughout – none more so than athletic goalkeeper Erin Herd, whose saves kept her side in the game on half a dozen occasions.

The best two sides in the competition approached the match with different game plans, and were able to cancel out each other's tactics for long periods.

NSW concentrated on short, accurate passes, building up through the centre and then releasing to the flanks, while Northern NSW opted for a more direct style of play – though both sides showed equally sharp flashes of skill at times.

Northern NSW started in a positive frame of mind, marauding forward and threatening through Ashley Wilson and Tara McMinn.

The best chance early on fell to Amber Neilson, in the 8th minute, but the midfielder smashed her volley wide

following a corner. NSW Academy replied with a quick break down the left, culminating in a low cross from Cannuli that skimmed across the face of goal.

The premiers applied further pressure to the NNSW goalmouth during the first half. Tracy Baker and Melanie Cotts made notable defensive interventions to keep the scoreline level.

Set-pieces seemed the most likely route to goal, and NSW midfielder Emma Davison almost capitalised on one in the 36th minute, heading just over from an inswinging corner.

A powerful drive from McMinn was well held by NSW keeper Monique Jackson shortly after, and further chances were fired wide by NNSW's Kate Gill and Elizabeth Kermode.

The best scoring opportunity of the first half was created, and nearly finished, by NSW captain Kylie Ledbrook. The skilled midfielder embarked upon a weaving run past two NNSW players but she shot just over the bar with only the keeper to beat.

The second half demonstrated that beating the keeper is never as easy as it sounds in print. NNSW custodian Erin Herd pulled off a string of reflex saves that frustrated the NSW attack and kept the game swinging from end to end.

She warded off goalbound strikes from Davison, Ayse Adalis and Ledbrook, before capping it all by plucking a Cannuli volley from thin air with a spectacular dive.

In between the NSW raids, Northern caused some havoc of their own. Amber Neilson was a force in the centre of the park, and forwards Gill and McMinn provided continually.

But it was the addition of superb substitute Leah Blayney that tipped the scales in NSW's favour. Her quicksilver ball skills created several opportunities, the best being in the 86th minute, when her cracking drive was parried down low by Herd.

Despite flurries of action at both ends, extra time was called for. The 400-odd fans freezing on the Lidcombe terraces must have been praying for a quick conclusion in the chilling wind. But they all stayed on, stamping their feet against the weather, as the riveting spectacle unfolded.

Extra time continued the trend of the second half. NSW opened up Northern NSW time and again without being able to deliver a killer blow. Cannuli was a culprit, skying her shots on a couple of occasions when it seemed simpler to score.

The tireless Ledbrook and the fresh legs of Blayney kept things moving for NSW, while stalwart play in midfield and defence from Northern NSW made it look like penalties would be the only way of getting a result.

Cannuli had a stinging volley expertly saved by Herd as the game petered out, but then the striker made a goal out of nothing and the championship belonged to NSW.

Wild celebrations ensued. NSW had the victory, but this match could easily have gone either way. Both teams



Leah Blayney made a big impact when she came on in the second half

were committed and well-organised, as should be expected of Academy sides, but one obvious feature of this match was the sheer talent of the players on show.

NNSW Academy were well served by Amber Neilson, Ashley Wilson and in-form keeper Erin Herd. Tracy Baker had a rock solid game at the back, while Kate Gill showed why she is currently in the frame for a spot in the Young Matildas line-up.

For NSW, Kylie Ledbrook, Ayse Adalis and Emma Davison stood out in a very strong team. Briony Holcombe also had an influential match, as did the unpredictable Cannuli, while the silky skills of substitute Leah Blayney are a purists' delight.

With teams and players like these, the future of women's football in the state is looking bright indeed.

NSW ACADEMY: 1 Monique Jackson 2 Belinda Ristevski 3 S. Jackson 4 Amy Gardner 5 Emma Davison 6 Graham E. 7 Leah Blayney 8 Briony Holcombe 9 Ayse Adalis 10 Kylie Ledbrook 11 Kristy Neilson 12 Emma Davison 13 Catherine Cannuli Substitutes: 4 Leah Blayney 3 Kate Gill 14 Caitlan Cooper 15 Danielle Brogan 19 Natalie Spirovski Coach: Alan S. S...

NSW ACADEMY: 1 Erin Herd 2 Meagan Cotts 3 Graham E. 4 Leah Blayney 5 Tracy Baker 6 Meagan Shepherd 7 Amber Neilson 8 Leah Blayney 9 Ashley Wilson 10 Briony Holcombe 11 Elizabeth Kermode 12 Kylie Ledbrook 13 Emma Stevenson 14 Caitlan Cooper 15 Danielle Brogan 19 Natalie Spirovski Coach: Mark Jones

NSW CRUSH NORTHERNERS

NSW Academy picked up the first of their two championship trophies of the day in Womens Super League Under-21s Grand Final, defeating NNSW Academy in convincing style.

It finished 6-1 in the end, though the match was far from one-way traffic. NNSW gave as good as they got for long periods, but they were able to finish off only one of their many attacks raids. Both teams fielded very young line-ups, but the skill level on show was very high indeed.

NSW Academy made the best possible start when Natalie Spirovski, dashing down the left, followed up a loose ball and slammed it into the net.

Northern replied shortly afterwards, forcing a series of corners that kept NSW pinned deep inside their half. The pressure told in the 9th minute, when a corner was cleared only as far as the prowling Emma Stevenson, who volleyed home an equaliser from a dozen yards.

With the score at 1-1, the match continued at a cracking pace. Both sides used the width of the pitch well, creating chances and switching play from end to end.

Something had to give, and it fell to the raw-bone Spirovski to again break the deadlock. The featherweight mid-fielder ran on to a through-ball, rounded a defender and slid home a shot from 10 yards. The goal put the wind in NSW's sails, and they began to play with supreme confidence. The outstanding Caitlan Cooper showed some of that quality shortly after Spirovski's goal, smashing home a 30-yard drive past NNSW keeper Alison Logue.

It stayed at 3-1 until a late flurry brought NSW three more goals. NNSW had goalkeeper Logue to thank for preventing the scoreline from ballooning even further. The blonde custodian batted goalbound shots away at least four times in the second half.

But eventually the pressure told, and Cooper headed home from a Servet Uzunlar corner in the 78th minute. NSW added two more before the end – a rifling drive from Katherine Cavanagh and a well-deserved goal for overlapping left flanker Olivia Kennedy.

Despite the heavy defeat, NNSW players did credit to their red-and-black shirts. Harmonie Attwill had a solid game at the back, while Logue and Tanya Sneddon also stood out. Striker Matina Avestas worked hard up front with no reward. For the champions, Caitlan Cooper and Natalie Spirovski were amongst the best performers, in an outfit that has excellent players spread out all across the park. Forward Servet Uzunlar, mid-fielder Cavanagh and defender Kennedy also shone for the blues.

NSW ACADEMY: 1 Alison Logue, 2 Rebecca Teasle, 3 Amanda Aldridge, 4 Harmonie Attwill, 5 Tanya Sneddon, 6 Sophia Carey, 7 Sara Lord, 8 Emma Stevenson, 9 Jessica Corkin, 10 Matina Avestas, 11 Saia Bullivant.

NSW ACADEMY: 1 Natalie Spirovski, 2 Caitlan Cooper, 3 Leah Blayney, 4 Emma Stevenson, 5 Kylie Ledbrook, 6 Ayse Adalis, 7 Belinda Ristevski, 8 Briony Holcombe, 9 Kristy Neilson, 10 Elizabeth Kermode, 11 Emma Stevenson, 12 Kylie Ledbrook, 13 Natalie Spirovski, 14 Caitlan Cooper, 15 Danielle Brogan, 16 Alison Logue, 17 Leah Blayney, 18 Caitlan Cooper, 19 Natalie Spirovski, 20 Alison Logue, 21 Caitlan Cooper, 22 Natalie Spirovski, 23 Alison Logue, 24 Caitlan Cooper, 25 Alison Logue, 26 Natalie Spirovski, 27 Caitlan Cooper, 28 Natalie Spirovski, 29 Alison Logue, 30 Caitlan Cooper, 31 Natalie Spirovski, 32 Alison Logue, 33 Caitlan Cooper, 34 Natalie Spirovski, 35 Alison Logue, 36 Caitlan Cooper, 37 Natalie Spirovski, 38 Alison Logue, 39 Caitlan Cooper, 40 Natalie Spirovski, 41 Alison Logue, 42 Caitlan Cooper, 43 Natalie Spirovski, 44 Alison Logue, 45 Caitlan Cooper, 46 Natalie Spirovski, 47 Alison Logue, 48 Caitlan Cooper, 49 Natalie Spirovski, 50 Alison Logue, 51 Caitlan Cooper, 52 Natalie 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SOCCER NSW


YOUTH LEAGUE REVIEW

by Barry Davis

What a weekend we have been through! The Youth League divisions commenced their finals series, the Metropolitan League played their Major and Minor semi finals and the Girls Youth League edged closer to their finals. All action, all excitement. What more could you want?

Premier Youth League

Valentine Park was the venue for the first round of the finals series and while the playing surfaces of Grounds One and Two were showing the signs of a long and busy season, they were still in very good condition. The only drawback was the strong wind from the north that simply did not quit from the first kick-off of the day until well after the final whistle of the last game played. We entered the day knowing that there would be two winners and two losers in each age group and that one of the losers would not return this season. However, few people would have anticipated the number of thrills and spills or the degree of anxiety that would be felt in almost every match.

Grade 12. Preliminary Semi Final. Wollongong Wolves wet into this game knowing that they had not beaten second-placed Olympic Sharks in the two previous attempts this season but that didn't deter them here. A goal in each half from Gareth Willis was enough to ensure that the Wolves would progress to the Major semi final, where they will face unbeaten minor premiers Blacktown City.

Elimination Semi Final. Northern Spirit finally broke their drought with a superb win over fifth-placed Marconi Stallions. Justin Hayward scored the opening goal in the 12th minute and then Marco Sama added the decisive strike in the 50th minute to allow Spirit to progress to the Minor semi final where they will face Olympic Sharks.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Olympic Sharks v Northern Spirit at Gabbie Stadium 8.45am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Blacktown City v Wollongong Wolves at Hajduk Stadium 8.45am

Grade 13. Preliminary Semi Final. With a win apiece during the season proper, the match-up between Olympic Sharks and Parramatta Eagles was always going to be a tight affair. Both teams had their share of chances and provided plenty of goalmouth action at both ends. The game breaker came in the 45th minute when Edward Kim capitalised on a rare mistake by the Eagles' goalkeeper and calmly slot home the winner to give the Sharks another go at Minor Premiers Blacktown City in the Major semi final on Sunday.

Elimination Semi Final. Fifth-placed Sutherland Shire Sharks had already rolled Northern Spirit twice this year and, in a match could really have gone either way, they made it a hat-trick on Saturday with a goal from T. Coop in the 30th minute proving decisive. Sutherland will now meet Parramatta Eagles in the Minor semi final on Saturday.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Parramatta Eagles v Sutherland Shire at Gabbie Stadium 10.00am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Blacktown City v Olympic Sharks at Hajduk Stadium 10.00am

Grade 14. Preliminary Semi Final. Nothing could prepare us for this match. It was absolutely unbelievable, even for those of us who watched them unfold. Third-placed Parramatta Eagles opened the scoring with a 23rd minute strike from M. Jurman and then Sean Rooney added another thirteen minutes later. The Demons looked dead in the water when they conceded an own goal fourteen minutes into the second stanza to trail 3-0. However, Craig Townley-Jones got one back in the 50th and then Mathew Ellis netted six minutes later to give Blacktown some hope. Stefan De Jesus then forced the match to go into extra-time with an equaliser two minutes from the final whistle. The ten minutes each way provided plenty of action but no goals until, with a mere forty seconds remaining on the clock, and the prospect of penalties becoming a certainty, David Catt (an U/13 who had come off the interchange bench) was in the right spot to give the Demons a remarkable victory and a place in the Major semi final.

Elimination Semi Final. There was more drama developing on the adjacent ground where Jamie Pitt gave fourth-placed Wollongong Wolves an early lead, but that was cancelled out six minutes later when Peter Zairovski found the net for Olympic Sharks. Eventually, extra-time was required to settle the issue. Five minutes in, Ahmed Muslemani provided the decider for the Sharks.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Parramatta Eagles v Olympic Sharks at Gabbie Stadium 11.30am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Marconi Stallions v Blacktown City at Hajduk Stadium 11.30am

Grade 15. Preliminary Semi Final. Third-placed Olympic Sharks rocked Blacktown City with a goal from Johan Leech in the 4th minute but the Demons regained their composure to systematically tear their opponents apart with some of the best quality football seen on the day. Jason Trifiro found the back of the net for an equaliser in the 8th minute and then Alvaro Malmerca gave Blacktown the lead in the 22nd minute. The Demons went on with the job in the second stanza, playing some fabulous possession football and they were rewarded when Trifiro added his second in the 67th minute and then Chris Bedzo made it 4-1 in the 68th minute.

Elimination Semi Final. Yet another hard-fought encounter saw the evenly matched Bankstown City Cubs and Northern Spirit going head-to-head. On the day Spirit were slightly better, finding the net through a double from A. Biddle while Bankstown's sole goal came from Reece Iredale.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Olympic Sharks v Northern at Gabbie Stadium 1.00pm

Major Semi Final Sunday

Marconi Stallions v Blacktown City at Hajduk Stadium 1.00pm

Grade 17. Preliminary Semi Final. There was nothing between Bankstown City Cubs and Wollongong City going into this game. Bankstown took the lead in the 10th minute thanks to a strike from R. Mileski but then the Wolves took charge. In the 48th minute J. Vinton found the net for the Wolves. Despite the best efforts of both teams, that was the end of the scoring in normal time and so it was to come down to a "Golden Goal" situation in extra-time with the decider coming from J. Potter who gave Wollongong the winner.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Olympic Sharks v Northern at Gabbie Stadium 1.00pm

Major Semi Final Sunday

Marconi Stallions v Blacktown City at Hajduk Stadium 1.00pm

Elimination Semi Final. Olympic Sharks has had the wood on Blacktown City all season and that trend continued in this sudden-death match. A hat-trick from Tarak Elzeh proved decisive despite fine second half goals from Dean Storey and Ben Lam.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Bankstown City Cubs v Olympic Sharks at Gabbie Stadium 2.30pm

Major Semi Final Sunday

Newcastle United v Wollongong Wolves at Hajduk Stadium 2.30pm

Super Youth League

Fortunately, the strong winds experienced on Saturday had disappeared for most of the Sunday matches at Valentine Park so the football was more enjoyable for players and spectators alike. There was action aplenty throughout the day, as expected, and many moments of high drama.

Grade 12. Preliminary Semi Final. Northern Tigers went into this match as the underdogs, but that didn't count for much in the finals. Play was even from beginning to end, but the difference was that Peter Cejka managed to find the net for the Tigers in the 34th minute. AC pushed hard to find an equaliser but their cause was not helped when they had a player sent off for a second yellow card..

Elimination Semi Final. There was not much to separate Macarthur Rams and fifth-placed Eastern Suburbs as they had beaten each other in the competition. Easts came up with the right formula on the day with goals from Alec Kennedy and Patrick Disalvo while the Rams responded through Cameron Faith

Minor Semi Final Saturday

AC United v Eastern Suburbs at Cromer Park 8.45am

Major Semi Final Saturday

Manly Warringah v Northern Tigers at Cromer Park 8.45am

Grade 13. Preliminary Semi Final. Nepean and Macarthur Rams entered this match with the in-season results all-square so the outcome was always going to come down to either something special or a bit of luck. The defences dominated play from start to finish, negating much of the midfield creativity from both teams. In the end, the match was decided in the 36th minute when Stephen Pleksun pounced on a loose ball at the far post and hammered it home.

Elimination Semi Final. Someone forgot to tell Blacktown Association that they were the underdogs for this clash with Manly Warringah Dolphins. They really took the game to the team that had beaten them twice in the competition and Jerry Kininjew's goal proved to be enough to carry them through.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

AC United v Macarthur Rams at Cromer Park 10.00am

Major Semi Final Saturday

Nepean v Blacktown Association at Cromer Park 10.00am

Grade 14. Preliminary Semi Final. Second-placed Northern Tigers finished the season one point ahead of Hajduk Wanderers and the head-to-head clashes were split with a win apiece so there was plenty of interest in this one. In the end, a goal for the Wanderers by A. Diomis (yes, he is the son of Con the referee).

Elimination Semi Final. Macarthur Rams may have entered this game as slight favourite but it was clear that Eastern Suburbs were having none of that. The end-to-end action kept the supporters of both teams on the edge of their seats and goals from L. Braude for Easts and James Young for the Rams only added to the tension. Eventually it came down to penalties. In the final wash-up, Easts converted five times while the Rams could only manage four.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Northern Tigers v Eastern Suburbs at Cromer Park 11.30am

Major Semi Final Saturday

Nepean v Hajduk Wanderers at Cromer Park 11.30am

Grade 15. Preliminary Semi Final. Eastern Suburbs beat Manly Warringah Dolphins on both occasions during the season so they were feeling quietly confident before this game. Easts found the net first through Shannon Knot but Manly replied with a goal from A. Mesiti. There were no more goals, so we had another penalty shootout. On this occasion Manly Warringah prevailed.

Elimination Semi Final. St George met Hills United in one of the tightest games all day. Once again, there was nothing to separate the teams in general play. Hills drew first blood with a goal from C. Andrews and then J. Couthino provided an equaliser for the Saints and that's the way things stayed. Penalties were called for again, and Hills prevailed this time, winning the match 5-4.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

Macarthur Rams v Manly Warringah at Cromer Park 1.00pm

Major Semi Final Saturday

Eastern Suburbs v Hills United at Cromer Park 1.00pm

Grade 17. Preliminary Semi Final. Fairfield Bulls and Hills United had been swapping places on the table all season and had both beaten the other during the competition. Fairfield made much of the early running and were rewarded with a goal by Pasquale Corso. Then Hills began to hit their straps and took control of proceedings for a while but they couldn't find a way through to put an equaliser.

Elimination Semi Final. Northern Tigers must have forgotten that Hajduk Wanderers had beaten them twice this season as they took on their opponents on equal terms and really had a go at them. They reaped the benefits of their enterprise with goals from Kevin Garcia and Sean Reagan.

Minor Semi Final Saturday

AC United v Fairfield Bulls at Cromer Park 2.30pm

Major Semi Final Saturday

Hills United v Northern Tigers at Cromer Park 2.30pm

Division One Youth League

Popondetta Park was the venue for Round One of the finals series, and what a day it turned out to be - plenty of action and the usual upsets that finals football is famous for.

Grade 12. Preliminary Semi Final. Granville had not beaten Wollongong United this season but they didn't let that stop them from having a go. They reaped the reward with a goal from D. Dumanski giving them the result.

Elimination Semi Final. MSC Liverpool had won both matches over Parramatta City during the season and were therefore entitled to favouritism. This game see-sawed from beginning to end. MSC got on the scoreboard first

through a 10th minute strike from J. Meechan but Parramatta responded in the 15th when M. Robb found the net and then they took the lead courtesy of a goal from T. Kotschis ten minutes later. MSC were back on level terms in the 30th and then they grabbed what proved to be the winner in the 40th through P. Sain.

Minor Semi Final Sunday

Wollongong United v MSC Liverpool at Popondetta Park 8.45am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Schofields Scorpions v Granville at Popondetta Park 8.45am

Grade 13. Preliminary Semi Final. Schofields Scorpions and Mt Pritchard finished neck and neck on the competition table although the Scorpions held a slight edge in the head-to-head encounters. This time the Mounties took the lead in the 15th minute through E. Sekovic and the same player doubled the score five minutes later. Dennis Dracic dragged one back for the Scorpions in the 25th but P. Colbach restored the Mounties' two goal buffer in the 40th.

Elimination Semi Final. Granville finished slightly better off on the table but that didn't seem to matter to Ryde City. They had already beaten Granville once this season and they repeated the dose with 1-0 result thanks to a goal from Anthony Carpozzi in the 33rd minute.

Minor Semi Final Sunday

Schofields Scorpions v Ryde City at Popondetta Park 10.00am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Canterbury Bankstown v Mt Pritchard at Popondetta Park 10.00am

Grade 14. Preliminary Semi Final. Canterbury Bankstown met Ryde City and they battled away for the full match without scoring. Extra-time failed to produce a goal so the match was to be decided from the penalty spot but that brought about its own set of problems as the referee needed to call on both teams to go through their roster twice before Canterbury Bankstown took the game 8-7.

Elimination Semi Final. Dulwich Hill had won both competition matches against Mt Pritchard and so they were entitled to feel confident. Dulwich Hill took the lead through a goal from I. Estevo in the 20th minute and Mounties equalised thanks to A. Pissano in the 40th. Sadly, it was an own goal that decided the issue in Dulwich Hill's favour.

Minor Semi Final Sunday

Ryde City v Dulwich Hill at Popondetta Park 11.30am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Schofields Scorpions v Canterbury Bankstown at Popondetta Park 11.30am

Grade 15. Preliminary Semi Final. Mt Pritchard have been solid performers all season and they went on with it in this match against Schofields Scorpions with a 4-1 result. J. Caposso scored a double with E. Squillaciotti and J. Ciabatti adding the others for the winners while D. Eddy netted for the Scorpions.

Elimination Semi Final. Ryde City were much too good for Rockdale City Suns, winning the match 4-1 thanks to goals from Lachlan Fogarty (2), Liam Cole and Matthew Harte while the Suns replied through T. Rachid.

Minor Semi Final Sunday

Schofields Scorpions v Ryde City at Popondetta Park 1.00pm

Major Semi Final Sunday

Dulwich Hill v Mt Pritchard at Popondetta Park 1.00pm

Grade 17. Preliminary Semi Final. Hawkesbury City and Dulwich Hill had a neck-and-neck finish on the final table but Dulwich were favourites going into the game, having won both previous matches. However, Hawkesbury had the final say with a 4-2 victory courtesy of a double to Trent Monkireno and one each to Thomas Finch and Grant McVicar. Launano Castro and Ahmed Elkhaddam responded for Dulwich Hill.

Elimination Semi Final. Parramatta City took the lead in the 25th minute through C. Anastopoulos but Wollongong United responded with an equaliser in the 35th from J. Murdzevski. After a scoreless second half extra-time was needed to decide the game and Murdzevski provided the winner for Wollongong.

Minor Semi Final Sunday

Dulwich Hill v Wollongong United at Popondetta Park 8.45am

Major Semi Final Sunday

Stanmore Hawks v Hawkesbury City at Popondetta Park 8.45am

S.S.I. Girls Youth League - Round 25

The top four in Grade 12 has been decided and the same applies to Grade 14 but there could be some changes in Grade 16. There is still a bit to play for next weekend. Sadly, Granville Magpies forfeited all games against Southern Branch.

ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

WELCOME back to another season of Italian football and after last season's exploits by Italian clubs in the European Champions League once again the Serie A has regained the mantle as the world's premier domestic league.

However, the focus in recent days has been on the Serie B and some of the farcical developments taking place there.

It's an football is never short of controversy and one only has to remember that 12 months ago the Serie A kick off was delayed for two weeks because of a dispute regarding television coverage.

The problem started in the summer when Catania turned to the law courts to get their relegation overturned because Napoli were not deducted two points for using an unregistered substitute.

The court ruled in Catania's favour and the Italian Federation was left in the difficult situation of having to decide whether or not to go ahead with 22 teams. In the end they decided for 24.

The decision has dominated the news for nearly two weeks but there seems to be more people upset rather pleased by the decision. The other 19 Serie B clubs for starters have threatened to boycott the competition and the dispute threatened to flow over to the Serie A with clubs such as Brescia saying that they would go out in sympathy with their lower division colleagues.

Catania President and owner is one Luciano Gaucci, the same president/owner of Serie A club Perugia. Now let's be frank - the man is loose cannon.

Remember last year when he sacked Ahn Jung-wan from Perugia, the Korean player who scored the goal against Italy that saw the Azzurri exit the World Cup. The whole world laughed at, but nevertheless was appalled by, that Gaucci brain explosion.

Later in the year our own Socceroo goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac was the victim of more Gaucci madness. After one poor game Kalac was relegated to third choice keeper and former AC Milan keeper, Sebastiano Rossi, now 38 years old, was bought to replace him. However, Kalac was good enough to show that Gaucci got it wrong and force his way back into the team.

Catania should never have turned to the Italian justice system because it contravenes the statutes of FIFA. The internal processes of the domestic federation must deal with these sorts of disputes.

The Italian Federation in its wisdom decided to recall the teams that were relegated from the Serie B, namely Genoa and Salernitana, to join Catania. However, they didn't recall Cosenza, the fourth relegated team, because they were not up to date financially with their payments to the ruling body.

Cosenza are fuming at this decision because there are some Serie A clubs who are behind in payments and Roma is even embroiled in a controversy regarding some forged documents.

Fiorentina have been allocated the 24th spot and here too there are people who feel that there is no justice in this decision. Fiorentina have gone straight from the Fourth Division (C2) to the Serie B bypassing the Third Division (C1).

Fiorentina are of course not the original Serie A Fiorentina that went bankrupt just over a year ago. This Fiorentina is the new club Fiorentina Viola that started from scratch in the C2 division last year.

The Fiorentina Viola owners were able to buy the Fiorentina name and logo from the liquidators over the summer and hence the rise of other clubs.

It's all rather messy but in Italy there is a general saying that best sums up the crazy world of Italian football: 'the musicians may change but it is still the same music'.

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Vince Grella should be in for a big year in Italy as he consolidates his place with Empoli. With a year's experience under his belt in the Serie A watch for Grella to really shine. AC Milan were very interested last season and for good reason.

Furthermore, without any shadow of a doubt, Grella is the player to occupy the central midfield position for the Socceroos. Despite Paul Okon's good game against Ireland a few weeks back, he is yesterday's man in that position.

Unless coach Frank Farina decides to use a sweeper, which is highly unlikely given his preference for a flat back four, then there is no room for Okon. As a sweeper Okon was once touted as the heir apparent to the great Franco Baresi by sections of the Italian media.

Grella was by far Australia's best in the Serie A last year, followed by Kalac and then Marco Bresciano who had limited opportunities at Parma.

Bresciano should be better for the experience and could perhaps hold down a permanent place in Parma's starting lineup. Kalac has proved himself to be a top-notch keeper and is arguably ahead of Mark Schwarzer at the moment.

Meanwhile, Italian affair's spies at Empoli can exclusively reveal that there are a couple of young Australian boys who seem to be impressing at the Serie A outfit. They are currently training with the Primavera (Youth) team and could be offered contracts.

There were no agents involved here nor any of our local clubs, which is very refreshing given the number of 'sharks' in our local game. Should these boys be offered contracts it would be a remarkable achievement given that they literally just turned up and the club was impressed enough to ask them back. Names and more details on their progress in upcoming editions of ABSW.

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Meanwhile Sydney listeners can tune into 98.5 FM on Sunday nights at 10.00pm for all the latest soccer news.

INTER MILAN 2 MODENA 0

New season, same old problems for Inter Milan, who struggled to overcome a tidy but uninspired Modena side at the San Siro Stadium.

The home side's win, thanks to goals in the last four minutes from striker Christian Vieri and defender Marco Materazzi, will not silence Hector Cuper's critics. The Inter coach is under huge pressure to win the league after two seasons in the shadow of Juventus and city rivals AC Milan.

JUVENTUS 5 EMPOLI 1

With two goals each from strikers Alessandro Del Piero and David Trezeguet and a late penalty by Marco Di Vaio, the champions crushed an Empoli side that closed down Juve's attacks efficiently in the first half, but fell to pieces in the second.

Last season these teams battled at opposite ends of the table. On this evidence there will be no change this year.

LAZIO 4 LECCE 1

Promoted Lecce were out of their depth at Rome's Olympic Stadium, where Roberto Mancini's clinical Lazio side served notice that they will be among this season's title contenders.

Former AC Milan playmaker Demetrio Albertini opened the scoring for the home side. Italian internationals Bernardo Corradi and Stefano Fiore made it 3-0 by half-time as Lazio's speed exposed Lecce's defensive frailties.

BRESCIA 1 CHIEVO VERONA 1

Brescia made an edgy start to the season when goalkeeper Luca Castellazzi fumbled Salvatore Lanna's long-range effort into his net after just 12 minutes against Chievo.

Without the creative skills of key player Roberto Baggio, who is recovering from knee surgery, they might have sunk even lower, but equalised from the penalty spot in the 58th minute after visiting defender Fabio Moro brought down Marco Pisano.

PERUGIA 2 SIENA 2

Siena celebrated their first-ever appearance in Italy's top flight with a hard-fought draw at Perugia.

Twice the home side seized the lead through strikers Zisis Vryzas and Jay Bothroyd, and twice Siena hauled them back, first through midfielder Andrea Ardito and then Rodrigo Taddei, who latched on to a pass by Norwegian Tore Andre Flo to beat Australian keeper Zeljko Kalac from the edge of the area.

REGGINA 2 SAMPDORIA 2

Sampdoria came from two goals down to frustrate Reggina and salvage a point following a 2-2 draw on their return to Serie A.



New Sampdoria signing Atsushi Yanagisawa (left) is marked by Reggina's Francesco Cozza during the 2-2 draw between the teams in the Serie A season opener.

UDINESE 1 AS ROMA 2

Last season only Juventus beat Udinese at home - a fact that makes AS Roma's 2-1 win so impressive, especially as it was achieved without suspended captain Francesco Totti.

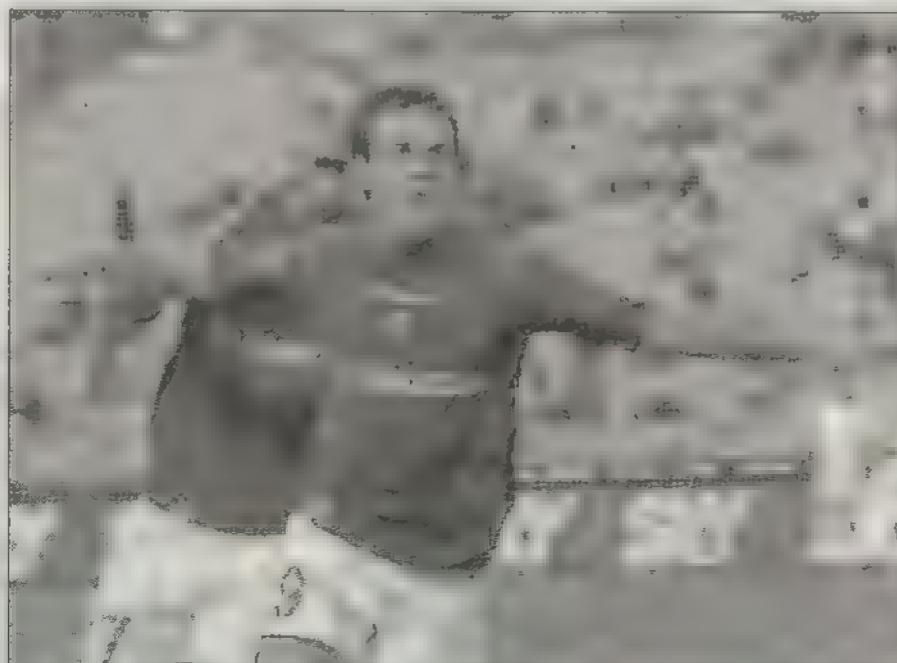
Udinese defender Per Kroldrup's 27th-minute strike cancelled out Marco Delvecchio's early goal for the visitors. Udinese, however, were reduced to 10 men four minutes after the break and Roma striker Antonio Cassano exploited the extra space to pick out Vincenzo Montella, who back-heeled the winner.

BOLOGNA 2 PARMA 2

Though his old strike partner Adrian Mutu has departed for Chelsea, Parma forward Adriano keeps on scoring. Bologna went ahead in each half, thanks to midfielders Andres Guglieminietro and Tomas Locatelli, but the burly Brazilian pegged them back on both occasions, first with a rifled shot from the edge of the area and then with a header three minutes from time.

REGGINA 2 SAMPA DORIA 2

Reggina came from two goals down to frustrate Sampdoria and salvage a point following a 2-2 draw on their return to Serie A.



Roma striker Vincenzo Montella (right) celebrates with team mate Daniele De Rossi after scoring the winner against Udinese.

FIXTURES

Sunday 14th September

Chievo	v	Juventus
Empoli	v	Reggina
Lecce	v	Ancona
Milan	v	Bologna
Modena	v	Udinese
Parma	v	Perugia
Roma	v	Brescia
Sampdoria	v	Lazio
Siena	v	Inter

SERIE A

Reggina 2 Sampdoria 2, Brescia 1 Chievo Verona 1, Inter Milan 2 Modena 0, Juventus 5 Empoli 1, Lazio 4 Lecce 1, Perugia 2 Siena 2, Udinese 1 AS Roma 2, Bologna 2 Parma 2, (Ancona vs AC Milan - Tuesday AET).

P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Juventus	1	1	0	0	5	1 3
2. Lazio	1	1	0	0	4	1 3
3. Inter Milan	1	1	0	0	2	0 3
4. AS Roma	1	1	0	0	2	1 3
5. Bologna	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
6. Parma	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
7. Perugia	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
8. Reggina	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
9. Sampdoria	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
10. Siena	1	0	1	0	2	2 1
11. Brescia	1	0	1	0	1	1 1
12. C Verona	1	0	1	0	1	1 1
13. Ancona	0	0	0	0	0	0 0
14. AC Milan	0	0	0	0	0	0 0
15. Udinese	1	0	0	1	1	2 0
16. Modena	1	0	0	1	0	2 0
17. Lecce	1	0	0	1	1	4 0
18. Empoli	1	0	0	1	1	5 0



ENGLISH



PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa 3 Leicester City 1, Bolton 0 Charlton 0, Chelsea 2 Blackburn 2, Everton 0 Liverpool 3, Middlesbrough 2 Leeds Utd 3, Newcastle Utd 0 Birmingham City 1, Tottenham 0 Fulham 3, Wolverhampton 0 Portsmouth 0, Southampton 1 Man Utd 0, Man City 1 Arsenal 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	4	4	0	0	10	2	12
Man Utd	4	3	0	1	7	2	9
Portsmouth	4	2	2	0	7	2	8
Man City	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Chelsea	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Birmingham	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
Fulham	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Southampton	4	1	3	0	3	2	6
Blackburn	4	1	2	1	1	8	5
Liverpool	4	1	2	1	4	2	5
Charlton	4	1	2	1	6	5	5
Leeds	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Aston Villa	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Everton	4	1	1	2	6	8	4
Tottenham	4	1	1	2	2	5	4
Leicester	4	0	2	2	4	7	2
Bolton	4	0	2	2	2	0	2
Newcastle	3	0	1	2	3	5	1
Middlesbrough	4	0	1	3	4	10	1
Wolverhampton	4	0	1	3	1	10	1

FIRST DIVISION

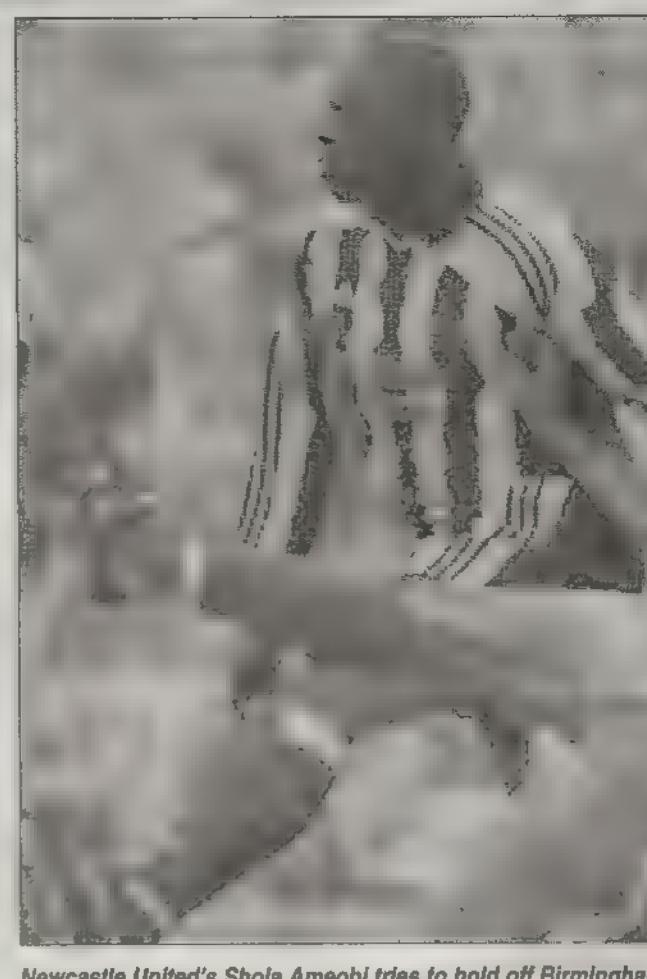
Aston Villa 3 Leicester City 1, Bolton 0 Charlton 0, Chelsea 2 Blackburn 2, Everton 0 Liverpool 3, Middlesbrough 2 Leeds Utd 3, Newcastle Utd 0 Birmingham City 1, Tottenham 0 Fulham 3, Wolverhampton 0 Portsmouth 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
West Brom	5	4	0	1	8	5	12
Reading	5	3	2	0	10	3	11
Sheff Utd	5	3	2	0	5	2	11
Wigan	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Crystal Palace	5	3	1	1	9	6	10
West Ham	5	3	1	1	5	3	0
Sunderland	5	3	0	2	8	3	9
Milwall	5	2	3	0	5	2	9
Nottingham Forest	5	3	0	2	8	6	9
Stoke	5	2	2	1	6	3	8
Cardiff	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Norwich	5	2	1	2	7	7	7
Crewe	5	2	1	2	4	5	7
Walsall	5	1	3	1	6	4	6
Burnley	5	2	0	3	7	9	6
Gillingham	5	1	3	1	3	5	6
Rotherham	5	1	2	2	1	5	5
Preston	5	1	1	3	3	6	4
Bradford	5	1	1	3	4	8	4
Wimbledon	5	1	0	4	7	12	3
Coventry	4	0	2	2	3	6	2
Ipswich	5	0	2	3	3	6	2
Watford	4	0	1	3	2	6	1
Derby	5	0	1	4	3	11	1

SECOND DIVISION

Barnsley 1 Notts County 1, Bristol City 1 Grimsby 0, Luton 3 Hartlepool 2, Oldham 3 Rushden & Diamonds 2, Peterborough 1 Stockport 2, Plymouth 3 Brighton 3, Port Vale 1 Brentford 0, QPR 3 Chesterfield 0, Swindon 2 Blackpool 2, Tranmere 1 Colchester 1, Wrexham 0 Bournemouth 1, (Wycombe vs Sheff Wed - Tuesday AET).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Vale	5	4	0	1	9	7	2
Barnsley	5	3	2	0	7	1	11
QPR	5	3	1	1	13	5	10
Brighton	5	3	1	1	10	6	10
Wrexham	5	3	1	1	5	3	10
Luton	5	3	0	2	9	8	9
Bristol City	5	2	2	1	9	4	8
Swindon	5	2	2	1	11	7	8
Hartlepool	5	2	2	1	9	7	8
Grimsby	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
Sheff Wed	4	2	1	1	8	7	7
Rushden & Diamonds	5	2	1	2	10	11	7
Blackpool	5	2	1	2	8	13	7
Tranmere	5	1	3	1	7	5	6
Plymouth	5	1	3	1	10	9	6
Peterborough	5	2	0	3	8	7	6
Bournemouth	5	1	2	2	6	7	5
Wycombe	4	1	1	2	7	9	4
Colchester	5	1	1	3	6	8	4
Oldham	5	1	1	3	9	12	4
Chesterfield	5	0	4	1	5	8	4
Stockport	5	1	1	3	5	8	4
Brentford	5	1	0	4	3	10	3
Notts County	5	0	1	4	1	12	1



Newcastle United's Shola Ameobi tries to hold off Birmingham's Jamie Clapham during their match at St James' Park.

M'SBROUGH 2 LEEDS UTD 3

Michael Owen scored twice to help Liverpool defeat Merseyside rival Everton 3-0 at Goodison Park for the Reds' first victory this season.

ASTON VILLA 3 LEICESTER 1

Aston Villa posted their first win of the new campaign after brushing aside Leicester City 3-1 at Villa Park.

Two goals in the opening 10 minutes set Villa on their way, with Ben Thatcher heading beyond his own goalkeeper Ian Walker after seven minutes and Juan Pablo Angel nodding a second three minutes later.

Angel scored his second after 16 minutes with a shot from the edge of the penalty area as Villa threatened to run riot.

Muzzy Izzet pulled one back early in the second half but City were well beaten.

N'CASTLE UTD 0 BIRMINGHAM 1

B'HAM 1 N'CASTLE UTD 0

German Cup

Third division Eintracht Braunschweig, the 1967 Bundesliga champions, knocked last season's finalists Kaiserslautern out of the German Cup with a shock 4-1 win, turning up the heat on coach Erik Gerets.

Gerets's team, winners of the Bundesliga in 1998, sit rock bottom of the German top-flight and must now recover from an embarrassing cup exit.

Jürgen Rische opened the scoring for Braunschweig after 22 minutes and Michel Mazingu-Dinsey doubled their advantage five minutes after half-time.

German international Miroslav Klose, so impressive at last summer's World Cup, pulled one back 11 minutes later but the hosts were not to be denied and further goals from Rische and Lars Fuchs gave them a notable scalp.

VfL Bochum joined Kaiserslautern on the Bundesliga casualty list, falling to a 2-1 defeat against SSV Jahn Regensburg of the second tier.

Bochum's defeat was engineered by goals from Andras Tolcsers and Markus Knackmuss.

Vahid Hashemian gave Bochum brief hope but the hosts hung on.

Holders and nine-time winners Bayern Munich

had no such worries cruising to a 5-0 victory over Borussia Neunkirchen.

Paraguayan international Roque Santa Cruz notched a treble for Bayern on his return from injury to add to efforts from Michael Ballack and Mehmet Scholl.

Cologne almost came undone but Dirk Lottner netted a late equaliser at Oberneuland and the Bundesliga side stepped up the pace in extra time and eventually ran out 5-2 winners.

Elsewhere, there were some big wins as the top flight clubs flexed their muscles.

Hertha Berlin ended their barren spell in front of goal thrashing SSV Reutlingen 6-1 to ease the pressure on coach Huub Stevens who has yet to see his side score in the Bundesliga.

The 1999 Cup winners and Bundesliga leaders Werder Bremen crushed Ludwigsfelder 9-1 with in-

form Brazilian Ailton notching a hat-trick inside 26 minutes.

Veteran striker Oliver Neuville netted twice as Bayer Leverkusen won 3-1 at Holsten Kiel and Champions League hopefuls Stuttgart hit four without reply against Leverkusen's second string.

Freiburg overcame Emmendingen 4-1 and Schalke triumphed 3-0 at Aindling.

There was no continuation of the dream for TSV Gerbrunn, the first side from Germany's ninth tier to have made it to this stage of the competition.

The minnows hosted second division side Wacker Burghausen and were taught a cruel lesson as the visitors ran out 14-0 winners.

Unterhaching also hit the goal trail as they overcame Oberhausen 6-2, Greuther Furth won 3-0 at Erzgebirge Aue and Karlsruhe required penalties to get past Mainz's reserve side.

SSV Reutlingen (A) 1 Hertha Berlin 6, Holstein Kiel (A) 1 Bayer Leverkusen 3, FSV Mainz Amateurs (A) 3 Karlsruher SC (II) 4, Erzgebirge Aue (II) 0 SpVgg Greuther Furth (II), 3 Jahn Regensburg (II) 2 VfL Bochum 1, Bayer Leverkusen Amateurs (A) 0 VfB Stuttgart 4, Ludwigsfelder FC (A) 1 Werder Bremen 9, SpVgg Unterhaching (II) 6 Rot-Weiss Oberhausen (II) 2, TSV Gerbrunn (A) 0 Wacker Burghausen (II) 14, Bergedorf-Lohbruegge (A) 1 VfL Wolfsburg 6, Borussia Neunkirchen (A) 0 Bayern Munich 5, TSV Aindling (A) 0 Schalke 04 3, FC Emmendingen (A) 1 SC Freiburg 4, FC Oberneuland (A) 2 Cologne 5 (AET), Eintracht Braunschweig (A) 4 Kaiserslautern 1, VfL Wolfsburg Amateurs (A) 2 Energie Cottbus (II) 0, TSG Hoffenheim (A) 4 Eintracht Trier (II) 3 (AET), Rot-Weiss Erfurt (A) 1 Alemannia Aachen (II) 1 (AET - Aachen won 4-5 on pens), Waldhof Mannheim (A) 0 Union Berlin (II) 4.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bremen	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Bayern	4	3	1	0	10	4	10
Stuttgart	4	3	1	0	5	0	10
Leverkusen	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
Dortmund	4	2	1	1	9	4	7
1860 München	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Wolfsburg	4	2	0	2	8	8	6
Freiburg	4	1	2	1	7	7	5
Schalke	4	1	2	1	6	8	5
Hansa	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Hannover	3	1	1	1	6	7	4
Bochum	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
Mönchengladbach	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Köln	4	1	0	3	3	5	3
Hertha	4	0	3	1	0	3	3
Eintracht	4	0	1	3	2	8	1
Hamburg	4	0	1	3	2	11	1
Kaiserslautern	4	1	0	3	2	5	0



Bayern Munich's Roque Santa Cruz celebrates a hat-trick of goals against fourth division team Borussia Neunkirchen in their German Cup first round match.

FIXTURES

20th September 2003

Hannover	v	M.gladbach
E.Frankfurt	v	Kaiserslautern
Freiburg	v	Schalke
VfB Stuttgart	v	B.Dortmund
Werder Bremen	v	1860 München
FC Cologne	v	Wolfsburg
B.Munich	v	B.Leverkusen
Hamburg SV	v	Hansa Rostock
Bochum	v	Hertha Berlin

David Beckham continued his dream start to his career at Real Madrid as he scored Real's first and had a hand in the build-up to their second in what was a dream debut at the Bernabeu.

Madrid's 2-1 win over Real Betis was highlighted by Beckham's side-footed goal from a slick Ronaldo pass after just three minutes.

Betis recovered from their early setback and gained a deserved equaliser when defender Juanito powered in a header from a Joaquin corner on 34 minutes.

Real upped the pace after the break and grabbed the winner when Beckham spun a long pass to Zinedine Zidane and the Frenchman clipped a perfect cross into the area for Ronaldo to smash in on the half-volley on 62 minutes.

Catalan giants Barcelona had to dig deep to claim

FIXTURES

Wednesday 3rd September

Osasuna	v	Valencia
Atlético	v	Albacete
Barcelona	v	Sevilla
Deportivo	v	Athletic
Mallorca	v	Zaragoza
Murcia	v	Racing
R.Sociedad	v	Celta
Betis	v	Espanyol
Villarreal	v	R.Madrid
Valladolid	v	Málaga



Real Madrid's David Beckham celebrates his first ever goal in a Spanish league match after hitting the net just two minutes into Madrid's 2-1 win over Betis.

fight back from a goal behind to claim a 1-1 draw at Espanyol.

Cameroon defender Pierre Wome put the home side ahead with a deflected free kick on 23 minutes, but Sociedad's new signing Lee Chun-Soo set up the equaliser for striker Darko Kovacevic after the break.

No goals at the La Rosaleda as Malaga and Villarreal appeared more concerned to avoid defeat than to look for a win on the opening day of the season.

Scoring chances were few and far between and the main action occurred when both sides were reduced to 10 men in the second half.

Despite dominating for long periods of the game, Valencia looked to be heading for a surprise defeat until Argentine playmaker Pablo Aimar popped up to score with a delightful solo effort 13 minutes from time.

Valladolid had taken the lead on 25 minutes when midfielder Francisco Sousa rounded keeper Santiago Canizares to slot home on the open net.

Walter Pandiani came off the bench to earn Deportivo Coruna a 1-0 win at promoted Real Zaragoza.

The Uruguayan centre-forward headed in from a Victor cross for the only goal after 67 minutes of an even game.

Deportivo's Galician neighbours Celta Vigo had a less successful start against Murcia.

Celta, who will be playing in the Champions League for the first time after finishing fourth last season, went ahead with a Savo Milosevic header after 32 minutes but Murcia kept plugging away and got the equaliser midway through the second half.

Pablo Contreras bundled over Francisco Maciel in the box and Luis Garcia, who had earlier struck a post with a snap shot from outside the area, scored

Albacete 0 Osasuna 2, Athletic Bilbao 0 Barcelona 1, Espanyol 1 Real Sociedad 1, Malaga 0 Villarreal 0, Real Madrid 2 Real Betis 1, Valencia 1 Valladolid 1, Celta Vigo 1 Murcia 1, Racing Santander 2 Real Mallorca 1, Real Zaragoza 0 Deportivo Coruna 1, Sevilla 1 Atletico Madrid 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Osasuna	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
2. Racing	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
3. Real Madrid	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
4. Barcelona	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
5. Deportivo	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
6. Sevilla	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
7. Murcia	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
8. Celta	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
9. Real Sociedad	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
10. Espanyol	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
11. Valladolid	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
12. Valencia	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
13. Villarreal	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
14. Malaga	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
15. Mallorca	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
16. Betis	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
17. Athletic	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
18. Atletico	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
19. Zaragoza	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
20. Albacete	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

WORLD



Dutch Eredivisie

RKC Waalwijk cruised to a 3-0 victory over Volendam to remain top of the Dutch first division.

Ajax Amsterdam sealed a hard-fought 1-0 win over Zwolle, while Feyenoord needed an injury-time goal to beat NAC Breda 2-1.

RKC Waalwijk lead the standings with nine points from three matches, ahead of Ajax on goal difference. Champions PSV Eindhoven are third on seven points, with Feyenoord fifth.

Rick Hoogendorp scored twice and Iwan Redan grabbed his fourth goal of the season to wrap up RKC's win over Volendam in the first half hour of the match.

Ajax continued to struggle and were indebted to South African Steven Pienaar's 32nd-minute goal for their narrow win over Zwolle.

Czech Republic international Zdenek Grygera left the pitch on a stretcher after a collision with Georgi Hristov.

NAC Breda took the lead at Feyenoord through Anouar Diba midway through the first half. Mariano Bombarda equalised after 83 minutes and deep into injury time Belgian international Thomas Busfleel headed the winner.

PSV Eindhoven followed up last week's five goal thrashing of Willem II with a comfortable 0-2 win at Twente Enschede on Saturday evening.

Former Partizan Belgrade strik-

er Mateja Kezman put the visitors ahead in the 18th minute with a fantastic lob over Twente keeper Jelle ten Rouwelaar.

The home fans' frustration was compounded when Denmark international Dennis Rommedahl sealed the victory with a fabulous solo effort in which the Danish striker took the ball past two defenders before slotting home past Ten Rouwelaar.

The second half saw a muted performance from both sides and PSV showed the gulf in class between the two sides by successfully defending their lead through to full-time.

Sammy Youssouf and Bjorn Daelemans were the heroes for struggling RBC Roosendaal in their 2-0 away win against Roda JC at the Parkstad Limburg.

Former Hvidovre striker Youssouf put the visitors in the lead in the 18th minute before Belgian Daelemans secured victory for RBC with an 89th-minute strike.

A battling performance from AZ Alkmaar saw Co Adriaanse's side pull off a narrow win 1-2 away to struggling Vitesse Arnhem.

The visitors took the lead four minutes prior to the interval through Michael Buskermolen, but substitute Ricky Bochem equalised for the hosts after 66 minutes.

Fellow substitute Martijn Meerdink gave AZ the victory, finding the back of the net four minutes from time.

Paul Matthijs gave Groningen an early lead against ADO Den Haag and Glenn Salmon sealed victory with a late second.

Resit Schuurman scored the winner three minutes before the break to give NEC Nijmegen their first points of the season at Utrecht.

PSV's Dennis Rommedahl slots one home past Twente keeper Jelle ten Rouwelaar.

Twente 0 PSV 2, Roda JC 0 RBC Roosendaal 2, Vitesse 1 AZ Alkmaar 2, Feyenoord 2 NAC 1, Ajax 1 Zwolle 0, Groningen 2 Den Haag 0, Utrecht 0 NEC 1, RKC Waalwijk 3 Volendam 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 RKC Waalwijk	3	3	0	0	7	0	9
2 Ajax	3	3	0	0	4	1	9
3 PSV	3	2	1	0	10	3	7
4 AZ Alkmaar	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
5 Feyenoord	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
6 Groningen	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
7 Heerenveen	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
8 Willem II	3	2	0	1	4	6	6
9 Roda	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
10 Utrecht	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
11 NAC	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
12 Roosendaal	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
13 Volendam	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
14 NEC	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
15 Twente	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
16 Den Haag	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
17 Vitesse	3	0	0	3	2	6	0
18 Zwolle	3	0	0	3	0	5	0



Greek Ethniki Katigoria

Champions Olympiakos underlined their Hellenic National League title aspirations with a 7-0 win against Akratitos.

In the kind of form Olympiakos have started the season, Akratitos did well to hold out until the 25th minute, when goalkeeper Angelos Georgiou brought down Lambros Houtos and was sent off. Predrag Djordjevic duly put his team ahead from the penalty spot before Dimitris

Panathinaikos, meanwhile, were in good form against OFI Crete FC, winning 3-1 to stay third. Michalis Konstantinou fired in first but the home team levelled almost immediately through Elias Kotsios. Young striker Dimitris Papadopoulos settled matters inside ten second-half minutes.

PAOK Thessaloniki ran out 2-0 winners against Egaleo, despite being reduced to ten men in the 29th minute when goalkeeper Kyriakos Tohouoglou was sent off,



Action from the Panathinaikos v OFI clash.

Mavrogenidis doubled the lead on the cusp of half-time.

The floodgates crashed open in the second half, with Mavrogenidis again on target. Two strikes from Lambros Houtos were followed by substitutes Alekos Tatsis and Pantelis Kafes weighed in with a goal apiece.

AEK Athens, in second place on goal difference, defeated a hapless Ionikos FC 3-0. Christos Maladenis' spectacular header was followed by two goals from Ilija Ivic, one from open play and the second from the penalty spot.

shortly after Giotis Egomitis lobbed opener. The home team secured the victory in the 78th minute courtesy of a header from Dimitris Salpingidis.

Nikos Kyzeridis, meanwhile, hit a hat-trick as he inspired Aris Thessaloniki to a 3-0 victory over Prodeftiki FC. Elsewhere, Xanthi FC and Panionios GC fought out a scoreless draw, Kallithea GS and Iraklis FC drew 1-1 while Halkidona FC defeated Paniliakos FC 3-1 in a match between newly-promoted teams.

Kallithea 1 Iraklis 1, Halkidona 1 Paniliakos 3, Xanthi 0 Panionios 0, Aris 3 Prodeftiki 0, OFI 1 Panathinaikos 3, Olympiakos 7 Akratitos 0, PAOK 2 Egaleo 0, AEK Athens 3 Ionikos 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 OLYMPIAKOS	2	2	0	0	9	0	6
2 AEK	2	2	2	0	0	4	0
3 PANATHINAIKOS	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
4 IRAKLIS	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
5 PANIONIOS	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
6 ARIS	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
7 KALLITHEA	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
8 PAOK	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
9 IONIKOS	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
10 AKRATITOS	2	1	0	1	1	7	3
11 KALITHEA	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
12 HALKIDONA	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
13 PRODEFTIKI	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
14 XANTHI	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
15 AEGALIO	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
16 OFI	2	0	0	2	1	7	0



Scottish Premier League

Rangers needed two late goals to dispose of Dundee United and regain their place at the top of the SPL table from Celtic with a 3-1 victory.

Nuno Capucho had given them an early lead but former Ibrox hero Billy Dodds netted a late equaliser before Shota Arveladze and Mikel Arteta replied with even later clinchers, the latter from the penalty spot.

The result maintained Rangers' perfect record this season - and United's succession of losses.

Celtic striker Henrik Larsson scored a hat-trick in a convincing 5-1 defeat of Livingston at Parkhead.

After Celtic's Alan Thompson missed a 12th minute penalty, Larsson put last season's UEFA Cup finalists ahead in the 25th minute when he turned in former Villa and Bolton midfielder Thompson's cross.

Shaun Moloney made it 2-0 six minutes before half-time when he followed up Thompson's parried shot with a close range header.

Larsson made it 3-0 in the 56th minute when Larsson followed up his own header after Livingston keeper Alan Main again failed to hold on first time.

Sweden forward Larsson completed his hat-trick in the 77th minute with a right foot strike.

Livingston substitute Derek Lilley pulled one back in the 84th minute after a mistake by Celtic goalkeeper Magnus Hedman.

But Celtic had the last word, Thompson completing the scoring in the final minute when his long range free-kick beat Main and flew into the back of the net.

Motherwell and Partick shared the points in an ill-tempered game at Firhill which saw four goals, nine bookings and two red cards.

James McFadden gave the home side a seventh-minute lead with a tremendous strike from 25 yards but the visitors battled back and equalised in the 25th minute with a Gerry Britton header after great work by strike partner James Grady.

The home side were stunned two minutes after the interval when midfielder Stephen Pearson was red-carded for an off-the-ball elbow on the Jags' David Lilley before McFadden netted a second in 68 minutes.

Stuart Taylor levelled the scores

in the 82nd minute but moments later the numbers were even when Jags defender Grant Murray was shown his second yellow of the afternoon for a foul on Well substitute David Clarkson.

Aberdeen were forced to settle for a point against Hibernian despite taking an early lead at Easter Road.

The Dons had headed into the game with no points on the board and they must have thought their luck had changed when Russell Anderson nodded them into the lead after just six minutes.

But Hibs responded by piling the pressure on their visitors and Scott Brown netted with less than 20 minutes remaining to grab a share of the points.

Dennis Wyness opened his goalscoring account for Hearts, as they inflicted a 1-0 defeat on Dunfermline.

He dazzled Tynecastle in the 62nd minute by picking the ball up 30 yards out and waltzing past the Dunfermline defence before slotting home from 12 yards.

Dunfermline struggled to get to grips with their hosts and, barring a



Celtic's super Swede striker Henrik Larsson celebrates a personal hat-trick against Livingston during their match at Celtic Park.

late flurry at the end of the first half, never looked like recording their first win at Tynecastle for 13 years.

A wonder goal by Kris Boyd gave Kilmarnock a share of the points in a 1-1 draw with Dundee at Rugby Park.

Nacho Novo's sixth goal in six outings this season had given Dundee the lead in the 54th minute and the visitors looked comfortable with their one-goal advantage.

But in the 78th minute Boyd fired in a tremendous angled shot which almost broke the crossbar before the ball nestled in the back of the net.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Rangers	4	4	0	0	15	5	12
2 Celtic	4	3	1	0	12	2	10
3 Hearts	4	3	0	1	6	1	9
4 Dundee	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
5 Dunfermline	4	2	1	1	4	2	7
6 Hibernian	4	2	1	1	6	7	7
7 Motherwell	4	1	1	2	4	7	4
8 Kilmarnock	4	1	1	2	4	8	4
9 Livingston	4	1	1	2	4	8	4
10 Partick	4	0	2	2	5</		



WORLD



French Ligue 1

Monaco has moved to the top of the French Ligue 1 ladder after downing promoted Metz 1-0. Monaco have gone top on 12 points, level with Marseille, who also won over the weekend.

Young defender Sébastien Squillaci nodded home in the 38th minute for Monaco who were short of a striker after Congo's Shabani Nonda was injured against Paris St Germain last week.

Former Real Madrid striker Fernando Morientes has joined the injury ravaged squad on loan but was a spectator for this match.

Lens beat Nice 1-0 thanks to a strike from forward Dagui Bakari in the 73rd minute. Nice had been the only unbeaten team left in Ligue 1.

Marseille won away at AC Ajaccio 1-0, Carmel Meriem scoring the only goal in the 64th minute.

Marseille were a little lucky to win in Corsica as Meriem's strike, helped by an expected bounce which took the ball past the keeper, came as Ajaccio looked in control.

Paris Saint Germain, who had big ambitions when the French season resumed, sank to their third defeat in five games as Montpellier secured a 3-2 win.

Struggling PSG opened the scoring in the 17th minute with a superb header by Brazilian Reinaldo after a free kick by Bernard Mendy.

But Montpellier equalised in the 57th minute thanks to Habib Bamogo after PSG defenders stopped playing, claiming he was offside.

Bamogo put Montpellier ahead 10 minutes later from close range, but Reinaldo added his second to bring PSG level following a counter-attack in the 73rd minute.

Montpellier had the final say, though, Portugal Rui Pataca scoring the winner three minutes from time.

Nantes could not break down Bordeaux's defence despite dominating the Atlantic derby, but the draw lifted them level with Lille who suffered a shock 2-1 loss at Sochaux.

Lille made the perfect start when Philippe Brunel volleyed home from Jean Makoun's cross but Sochaux equalised three minutes later thanks to Brazilian Santos before taking the lead when Lille defender Eric Abidal scored an own goal after a Bruno Pedretti corner.

Champions Lyon also slumped to a 2-0 defeat at En Avant Guingamp giving the Breton side their first Ligue 1 victory of the season.

Lyon hoped the addition of Giovane Elber from Bayern Munich would bring some new striking power, but the Brazilian was largely ineffective.

Two defensive blunders on a rain-soaked pitch in the first half handed Guingamp, who had scored only once in their four previous games this season, a well deserved win.

Burkina Faso's Moumouni Dagano opened the scoring in the 31st minute before Argentine Fabrizio Fuentes doubled the lead eight minutes later with a thundering shot from outside the box and beat goal-keeper Gregory Coupet.



Monaco's Ludovic Giuly gets his head to the ball ahead of Metz's Franck Signorino.

counter-attack before Chaouky Ben Saada doubled the lead five minutes later.

Strasbourg dominated Le Mans from the start and were rewarded in the 33rd minute when Senegal's Mamadou Niang broke the deadlock thanks to a fine pass from veteran midfielder Corentin Martins.

Niang made it two in the 56th minute before Serbian-born Daniel Ljuboja wrapped up the game with a last-gasp goal.

Sochaux 2 Lille 1, Guingamp 2 Lyon 0, Montpellier 3 PSG 2, Auxerre 2 Stade Rennes 1, Toulouse 0, Bastia 2, Le Mans 0 Strasbourg 3, Nantes 0, Bordeaux 0, Monaco 1 Metz 0, RC Lens 1 Nice 0, AC Ajaccio 0 Marseille 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Monaco	5	4	0	1	10	5	12
2 Marseille	5	4	0	1	6	2	12
3 Lille	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
4 Nantes	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
5 Lens	5	3	1	1	4	3	10
6 Nice	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
7 Strasbourg	5	2	1	2	8	5	7
8 Bordeaux	5	2	1	2	5	4	7
9 Lyon	5	2	1	2	5	4	7
10 Ajaccio	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
11 Montpellier	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
12 Sochaux	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
13 Bastia	5	2	1	2	3	4	7
14 Rennes	5	1	3	1	4	4	6
15 Auxerre	5	2	0	3	6	8	6
16 Metz	5	1	1	3	3	4	4
17 PSG	5	1	1	3	5	8	4
18 Guingamp	5	1	1	3	3	6	4
19 Mans	5	0	2	3	1	6	2
20 Toulouse	5	0	2	3	1	7	2

Serbian & Montenegro

OFK Belgrade maintained their perfect record and went top of the Serbia and Montenegro with a 1-0 home win over city rivals Obilić.

Young striker Branko Baković powered home a 40th minute header to clinch it for OFK in a top-of-the-table clash thoroughly dominated by the new league leaders.

Obilić, who started the day as the front runners, were spared a more convincing defeat by keeper Predrag Ristović, who made several fine stops and saved a Milos Kolaković penalty on the stroke of halftime.

OFK have a maximum nine points from three matches. Top flight newcomers Napredak Krusevac are second on seven and Partizan Belgrade moved up to third on six points with a 6-2 drubbing of Kom Podgorica on Sunday.

Former European champions Red Star Belgrade produced another lacklustre performance in a 1-1 draw at Zeta Golubovci and are languishing in ninth position with four points from three matches.

Partizan struggled in the first half against newly promoted Kom after a Champions League qualifying win over Newcastle on penalties in midweek but moved up a gear in the second half to delight their fans again.

Two goals apiece from Andrija Delibasic and Ljubinko Drulović and one each by skipper Sasa Ilic and Damir Cakar saw off the visitors who held their own in the opening period and were level 2-2 at halftime.

A Nenad Bromic penalty in the 48th minute gave Zeta the lead against Red Star, who avoided an embarrassing defeat thanks to an 87th minute effort by reserve striker Nenad Stojanovic.

Elsewhere, Zeleznik Belgrade enjoyed a 3-0 win at Vojvodina Novi Sad to stay in the top four third while UEFA Cup campaigners Sartid Smederevo moved seven places up to fifth with a 5-1 rout of Buducnost Banatski Dvor.

Marko Pantelic scored twice and Nenad Miroslavljević, Milorad Zecević and Marko Paunović added one apiece for the hosts in their best performance of the season so far.

Partizan 6 Kom 2, Sartid 5 Banatski 1, Zeta 1 Crvena Zvezda 1, Napredak 1 Zemun 0, Hajduk 1 Obrenovac 1, OFK 1 Obilić 0, Sutjeska 1 Borac 0, Vojvodina 0 Zeleznik 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 OFK	3	3	0	0	4	1	9
2 Napredak	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
3 Zeleznik	3	2	0	1	6	1	6
4 Sartid	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
5 Obilić	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
6 Partizan	3	2	0	1	13	5	6
7 Sutjeska	3	2	0	1	2	3	6
8 Zemun	3	1	1	1	3	1	4
9 Crvena Zvezda	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
10 Hajduk	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
11 Zeta	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
12 Banatski	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
13 Obrenovac	3	0	2	1	1	3	2
14 Vojvodina	3	0	1	2	1	6	1
15 Kom	3	0	0	3	4	11	0
16 Borac	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

FIFA WORLD RANKING



1 Brazil	834	1	0	1	0	51	Wales	558	50	-1	52	1
2 France	814	2	0	2	0	52	Côte d'Ivoire	555	59	7	64	12
3 Spain	762	2	-1	3	0	53	New Zealand	550	51	-2	49	-4
4 Argentina	754	5	1	5	1	54	Trinidad and Tobago	549	52	-2	47	-7
5 Netherlands	752	6	1	6	1	55	Slovakia	544	53	-2	55	0
6 Germany	745	4	-2	4	-2	55	Venezuela	544	63	8	69	14
7 Turkey	733	8	1	9	2	55	Austria	544	61	6	54	-1
8 England	727	7	-1	7	-1	58	Congo DR	541	65	7	65	7
9 United States	717	10	1	10	1	59	Iceland	538	70	11	58	-1
10 Czech Republic	712	13	3	15	5	59	Scotland	538	64	5	58	-1
11 Italy	711	12	1	13	2	61	Zimbabwe	536	55	-6	56	-5
12 Mexico	711	9	-2	8	-3	62	Estonia	534	61	-1	60	-2
13 Denmark	710	10	-3	12	-1	63	Cuba	532	56	-7	71	8
14 Ireland Republic	703	15	1	14	0	64	Iraq	531	56	-8	53	-11
15 Portugal	692	14	-1	11	-4	65	Thailand	529	59	-6	66	1
16 Cameroon	691	18	2	16	0	65	Guatemala	529	58	-7	78	13
17 Belgium	672	16	-1	17	0	67	Zambia	526	69	2	66	-1
18 Costa Rica	663	17	-1	21	3	68	Algeria	522	66	-2	68	0
19 Sweden	663	20	2	24	6	69	Ghana	513	67	-2	60	-9
20 Paraguay	657	19	-1	18	-2	70	Chile	510	73	3	84	14
21 Romania	652	27	6	24	3	70						

Action Packed Premier League Highlights

